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THE LIFE
OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST.

BY

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CHARLES F. ROPER

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

If there be an eternal God, who created the earth, and made man in His image and likeness, nothing is more reasonable, than that He should have revealed to man His will, and, in whatever way it might be, it would be supernatural. Accordingly, Jesus' conception was a mystery, His life superhuman, and every attempt to write it must outshadow more or less of the faith, intellect, and knowledge of the writer,—as is seen in the lives by Renan and Strauss, by Liddon, Farrar, and Geikie.

This life aims to show from the revealed and historical records, and scientific and critical analysis, that Christ was the incarnate Son of God, the Messiah, of prophecy; because He knew, revealed, and did, what only God could,—developed Judaism into Christianity, offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of man, and organized a kingdom to carry on the work of salvation He began, to prepare the world for His second coming to judge it.

Though Christ's knowledge was in advance of His age, and He revealed more of the mysteries of God and nature than all the prophets and philosophers who lived before Him, yet, the Jews rejected Him as their Messiah; and though He foretold the future results of His mission, in ways which have ever since

been proving His Divine knowledge, men are yet divided in their opinions of Him.

The title of Christ is applied to Him, in His pre-existent state as the Son of God; and He is represented as exercising the authority of a Prophet, Priest, and King in Heaven; and these offices help us to understand many things in His incarnate life. St. Paul calls Him, "the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature," says all things were created by Him, and for Him, in heaven and earth; and by Him all things consist. And St. John says, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

And from all this, Christ's human nature appears to be a development from the Godhead, to manifest God's wisdom, power and love, in the works of Creation and Redemption; and for the final destruction of all evil, and to exalt man and creation to a higher state than their original one.

As the Lord God, He wrought with the Father and the Spirit in creating the worlds, and instructed Adam concerning good and evil; and instituted a way of recovery from his fall, and promised a Saviour in the seed of the woman; and provided a Heavenly Paradise, where neither Satan, sin, nor death can enter, while man prepares for Heaven.

In Jesus, God and man, matter and spirit were forever united; and in this mystical union, He fills the whole horizon of the past and future eternity. And it looks as if there was something of humanity in the Godhead, revealed in man's creation, which could not be revealed without His son's incarnation in man's nature—Man's creation was the concurrent work of the Holy Trinity, "Let us make man in our own image, and after our likeness;" the image is man's three-fold nature, body, soul, and spirit; the likeness, man's original holiness. That revelation was preserved among all nations, as is evident from the ancient

mythologies, polytheisms, and theologies; and helped to prepare them to believe in the incarnation, when it should come.

Moreover, the Son of God often appeared on earth, under a human or angelic form, to Noah and Abraham, Jacob and Moses, directing the great events that were preparing the way for His incarnation. On the Mount He instructed Moses how to prepare the Tabernacle, and Ritual, and Priesthood, which were to develop into His Church, liturgy and ministry. St. Paul says, "The Israelites followed that Rock, and that Rock was Christ."

The Psalmist speaks of "The Man at God's right hand;" Daniel saw in a vision, "One like the Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven, and an everlasting kingdom and dominion were given Him." And this looks as if man must be more like God than the angels; and so dearer to Him, because when the angels fell there was no redemption for them.

From all God has revealed in creation and redemption, there is a universal law of evolution proceeding from Him, and perfected in Christ, who said, "I came out from God;" as the Son of Man, and through Him, men have ever since been changing into His spiritual likeness, and passing by death to a higher life, and in Paradise preparing for Heaven, where they will finally be changed into His likeness from glory to glory.

That seems to be the higher law, similar to the development in the physical world; creation being a development from an elementary magma "without form and void;" and all animal and vegetable life are so created that they reproduce themselves by a similar law; and the great works of creation and redemption are passing through changes to perfection.

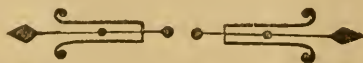
We discover these mysteries slowly; only one century ago oxygen, the most abundant element in creation, was discovered; and recently we have learned that the gases can be liquified; and the complex nature of sun light, and its economy in the animal and vegetable world are modern discoveries; and we do

not yet know the mystery of life, of instinct and intellect, or how the forces of nature are correlated, or cause the movements of the planets.

No wonder, then, that it took four thousand years to prepare the world for Christ; or that men were slow to believe in Him, when we cannot now understand the nature of the Trinity in God, or ourselves. But if any will believe only what they understand, they will have a narrow creed.

We grow wise by studying what is revealed of these mysteries, and our present happiness and eternal life are involved in them. We see God's first revelation was creation, that revealed His wisdom and power; and the second revelation made known His justice, love, and mercy; while the incarnation, resurrection from the dead, ascension to Heaven of Christ, and sending the Holy Ghost to abide on earth, have revealed to us a knowledge of God, and of the glory that awaits the righteous in a future life, that we never should have known without them.

And we have such reasons to believe in Christ, as the Son of God, as no generation before us ever had; because history, science, and fulfilled prophecies of this nineteenth century have shed such light on Him, as no preceding generation had. And we see in the progress of man, and the development of human events, how vast the life and power of Christ on earth now are; and how certainly we may infer, that all He has revealed concerning the destiny of mankind in time and eternity will surely come to pass. And then, that His vast works of creation and redemption, both now progressing towards completion, will be perfected when He comes again in the glory He had with the Father before creation began.





CHAPTER II.

THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES.

The first prophecy of a Saviour, to redeem man from the power of Satan, sin, and death, was, that the seed of the woman should produce him; no intimation was given of the time, or place of His birth, or of any special glory to attend Him.

The first man was created from matter, had no mother, and no father but God; the Messiah was to have a mother, and no intimation of a father; and His Divine nature was hidden for centuries, and gradually unfolded by prophecies until He came.

Eve had no knowledge of the nature of the Messiah, sacrifice was appointed for the remission of sins until He came; and when Cain was born, she evidently supposed he was the Messiah, because she said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord."

The hope of such a Saviour is manifest in the oldest religions and traditions of mankind; and Pagans looked for a king who would establish a magnificent, universal, empire; while later prophecies foretold that He would be a descendant of Abraham, a prophet like Moses, and in the royal line of David, and would elevate the race to a higher spiritual and intellectual state, and enable them to overcome themselves, the world, and the devil.

Balaam, a Gentile prophet, said, "Messiah would be a king, whose sceptre would rise out of Jacob, and His kingdom be ever-

lasting;" and Pagan priests preserved the tradition by their sacrifices, which looked to Him as a satisfaction for sin; they confessed that this life is a sad pilgrimage, and they had no hope for its ills until a Deliverer should come from on high.

The second person in the Egyptian theogony, held a similar relation to that of Christ in the Godhead, and the deity oftenest named in the Hindu songs is Vishnu,—the second person of the Hindu Triad; and the Greeks and Romans also expected a Deliverer like the other Pagans.

The oldest Sibylline Books, which certainly have some traditions of revelation and true religion that existed even before Noah, also have the promise of a great Deliverer, called "a Heaven sent king, the Mighty God," a restorer of the kingdom of justice and holiness on earth; and again they say, "God will send a king from Heaven, who will judge men in blood and a flame of fire." And they also predict, that man will abandon false gods, and return to the worship of the only true God. How much of this last truth was interpolated in later times, we do not know; but certainly some of their oldest vaticinations are as old as the times of Moses and Homer.

Revelation and tradition alike helped to preserve the hope of the Messiah; but the Psalmist foretold Him as the Lord's anointed, and describes the particulars of His earthly life, death, resurrection, and ascension to Heaven, and calls Him "God our Saviour;" but that was only in the popular sense, in which the Jews often used the word God, as applied to an eminent person; and that was commonly held by them, and our Lord's disciples after He came.

Such was the state of prophecy and the world a thousand years before Christ's birth, and at the end of the second stage of its development. And the prophets after David and Solomon began a new era of revelation, fortelling Christ's advent with more detail; they said He would be born of a virgin, and His

name be Immanuel, "God with us;" and, as the Redeemer, He would come to Zion, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel; and while He would heal the sick, comfort the troubled, bind up the broken hearted, deliver captives, preach the Gospel to the poor, and forgive sins, He would be Himself the archetype of all human suffering and sorrow—despised and rejected by men, cut off for the sins of the world, die with malefactors, have His burial with the rich, rise from the dead, ascend to heaven, be glorified in the Godhead, and draw all men unto Him.

Daniel foretells the exact time of Christ's birth; Micah names Bethlehem as the place; Haggai said: "He is the desire of all nations;" and Malachi, the last of the minor prophets, said He would rise on the world as the Sun of Righteousness; Zacharias, the connecting link between the prophecies of the Law and the Gospel, said, taking the infant Jesus in his arms: "God hath raised up a horn of Salvation for us, in the house of His servant David;" and Caiaphas, the last legal high priest and prophet of Judaism, closed the Canon of Messianic prophecy, saying to the rulers of the Jews, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this He spake not for Himself; but being high-priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation."

From these paradoxical prophecies, the Jews did not know what kind of a person Christ would be; the titles "God with us," and the "Lord our Righteousness," implied to them only that He would be a man highly endowed by God, would work mighty miracles, and establish an universal temporal kingdom. The Hebrews often used the term God in that sense; Moses was called by Jehovah, the God of Pharaoh; the Judges were called Gods, because they judged by God's authority; and Christ said to the Jews, "Is it not written in your law, I said ye are Gods? If He called them Gods to whom the word of God came, and the

Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son God?" But that He was so, as the second person of the Trinity, was one of the secrets they were not to know until His resurrection.

The unchangable faith of the Jews, that the Lord our God, is ONE God, and but one Person in the Godhead; yet, maintained by them, shows how impossible it was for them to believe in Christ, as He is revealed in the Gospel. Though the learned Jews had learned from the Egyptians something of the Logos, as the word is used in the Gospel, but they referred it to the wisdom of the Messiah.

History and existing monuments prove, that the prophecies were written centuries before Christ; and the evidence is greater that they were fulfilled in Christ, who was born in the reign of Cæsar Augustus, as they are recorded in the New Testament. And they have internal and external evidence of a Divine origin, because they foretell events none but God could know, and are woven into the history, traditions, and religions of mankind. For all the types, sacrifices, and ceremonial of Judaism; and all the religious rites of Paganism, and the rise and fall of nations, helped to prepare for the Messiah, exactly as prophecy foretold He would come.

Without the prophecies, no such Christ could have been imagined, and when He came the Jews who preserved them rejected Him as their Messiah; and unless Christ had fulfilled the prophecies, the world would never have believed Him to be God's incarnate Son; but we believe in Him, because no such man had appeared before Him, as none such has since.

And these prophecies fulfilled before and since Christ, are more conclusive proofs of His divinity, than His doctrines, miracles and holy life, because imposture is impossible; we see how they were, and are fulfilled, and now fulfilling.



CHAPTER III.

THE ARCH-ANGEL'S ANNUNCIATION.

The Bible represents the angels as ministering between God and men, in all the extraordinary events, that prepared the way for the incarnation of the Son; announcing His conception, attending His birth and whole earthly life, and witnessing His resurrection and ascension to heaven; and Christ foretold, that they will come with Him at His second advent, and an arch-angle's trump will sound the knell of time, and summons the dead to the judgment.

B. C. 534, the arch-angel Gabriel, whose place is before God's throne, was sent to reveal to Daniel the exact time when "the Messiah, the Prince, should be born; and he then disappeared, and nothing was heard of him in this world for five centuries, when he appeared to Zacharias, while he was officiating in the Temple, and announced that his wife Elisabeth would be the mother of a miraculous child, the Forerunner of the Messiah.

Six months later, Gabriel returned to Nazareth, with this annunciation to the Virgin Mary, "Hail thou who art highly favored, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women; 'Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God, and behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shall bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and

shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the House of Jacob forever.' ”

Mary, at first terrified, then said to the angel, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” And Gabriel answered, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, also that Holy Being, who shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.” Thus he explained the first great Messianic prophecy.

God gave the name Jesus, by the angel, to the child before He was conceived, and thus designated His office of Saviour; and Mary's confession to her Virginitv shows, that she expected her child would be only a miraculous conception like her great ancestor's child Isaac, or her cousin Elisabeth's; calling Him the Son of the Highest, would be understood by her according to the Jewish expectation of the Messiah; and she never knew, until her child was glorified in heaven, that He was the second person of the most Holy Trinity.

The blessing then pronounced on Mary, revoked for her the curse on her mother Eve, from whom she inherited the seed from which the Saviour sprang; and she was favored by God, to be the earthly mother of the human nature of Christ; she was blessed in her maternal love, in training His unfolding mind, in the joy she felt in His holy manhood, in His teaching and miracles, His triumph over death, in His ascension to heaven, and the assurance that He was glorified in the Godhead, and worshipped by the angels.

She was blessed also in seeing in her Son, what was foreshadowed in the prophecy, that He would be of the seed of the woman, that He had a feminine delicacy and tenderness, with the strength of a perfect manhood, and the holiness of God.

Besides all that, she is blessed now, as no other woman ever was, in occupying a place in Christ's Church; two yearly festi-

vals in her honor, and in the religious thought of the world; the angelic "Hail Mary" has been a continual salutation to our day. But, above all, she is blessed in the rank and glory she has enjoyed among the saints in Paradise, where she is waiting, in expectation of the eternal glory she will enjoy with Christ, after her resurrection, in heaven. Surely the promise has been, and ever will be, fulfilled,—that God has blessed her among women.

Mary was told by Gabriel, that her Cousin Elisabeth also had conceived a miraculous child; and she went with haste to visit her, and when she saluted Elisabeth, the babe leaped in her womb for joy, and she said with a loud voice: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb; and whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me; for lo! as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy; and blessed is she who believed, for there shall be a performance of those things that were told her from the Lord."

Though these words were a benediction, they were also prophetic; and doubtless Elisabeth knew no more of their full import, than the prophets did of their prophecies; and she called Mary blessed, as the mother of her Lord, only in the sense of her Jewish expectation, that her child would be the Messiah. And thus it was, a woman who lost men their innocence and salvation, was chosen by God to give the race a Saviour; and show His power over Satan, by making her seed destroy Satan's power, and consign him to eternal punishment in hell; one woman brought sin and death into the world, and God made another woman to bring in righteousness and eternal life.

MARY'S ANTHEM OF THANKSGIVING.

And Mary said: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour; for He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden; for behold, from

henceforth all generations shall call me blessed ; for He who is mighty hath done great things to me ; and holy is His name ; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts ; He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree ; He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away ; He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy ; as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever. And Mary abode with her about three months (which was until John the Forerunner of her Son was born,) and returned to her own home.

All this was evidently said by Divine inspiration, being partly historical, and partly prophetic ; she did not understand the hidden meaning, when she said she rejoiced “ in God my Saviour ; ” only professed her faith that her child would be the Messiah, and the temporal Restorer or Saviour of herself and all God’s people. Elisabeth’s son was to be called “ the Prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.”

And Mary and Elisabeth were the first of the nation, who believed that the fullness of time for Messiah’s coming was fulfilled, and that their sons were miraculously sent by God, in fulfillment of the prophecies respecting Christ and His messenger. Both of these women were descendants of Abraham, the friend of God, and both were in the royal line of David and Solomon ; and so Mary confessed that God in blessing her had remembered His promise and mercy, and truth to the House of Israel. But neither of them were thus honored of God, because of their pedigree or rank.—for the House of David was almost forgotten by man. Mary’s family was poor, and she was betrothed to a poor man ; but both of them were righteous before God, and so were chosen by Him, to fulfill His purposes, instead of any other of David’s descendants. Mary had grown to womanhood in a quiet village, modest, devout, and her piety probably

unobserved but by the all-seeing Heavenly Father, who chose her to be the Mother of His incarnate Son.

For four thousand years this child had been the Desire of all nations, and for eight centuries He had been expected as the offspring of a virgin mother ; and ever since His birth, the faith and purity and sorrows of the Blessed Virgin have helped to confirm man's belief in Christ, and to spread His religion. And her name is embodied in the creed of His Church, as well as the Gospel ; and from her day, women have been co-laborers in all good works for the extension of His Kingdom.

The New Testament furnishes names of Deaconesses, who helped the Apostles, and the roll of Martyrs has the names of illustrious women who suffered for Christ ; and history tells of many who have aided in spreading missions in the world. The Empress Helena was conspicuous in extending Christianity in the Roman Empire, and missions in Germany, Gaul, and Britain and Russia were assisted by women ; and the names of Clotilda, Bertha, Giselle, Queen Ann, and a host of others are among the names of the immortals in history.

And we learn from the Blessed Virgin, that neither rank, nor riches, is essential to bring us into favor with God and honor among men ; and that we need not travel or suffer martyrdom, as the Apostles did, to win everlasting renown ; because the Blessed Virgin attained her glory by doing her duty in an humble station, though she was of a royal line. And so may all obtain the honor and glory God alone can give, by doing their duties patiently in that state of life where He has placed them.

It is not what the world thinks of us, but the way we make our character like Christ's, that determines God's estimate of us ; and what will be our condition in Paradise, and our glory or shame, when we meet Him at the judgment.

No one knows what part God designs him to play in the role of time, nor what will be the result of his life work ; but

we do know, if we do our best to God and man, where our lot is cast, our labor will not be in vain in the Lord.

And Oh! what a blessed lesson the lowly Virgin's example is, for the great masses of our race,—the poor and disappointed, who are troubled because they see no way for them to do good and help the world's salvation: because she is so honored by God for humility, and righteousness, and submission to God's will. And if we strive for these graces, in the reach of all, He will make all things to work for our good as He did for hers; for He lays no cross on any without giving them grace to bear it, if they will only ask it. He tries our faith and love and obedience here, to see how much love and glory we shall be worthy to receive in the life everlasting.

There is the burden of some cross in the lot of every mortal laid on him by God, as the blessed Virgin's was on her; and when the Angel told her what was to happen to her, which, under other circumstances would have filled her with shame and sorrow, she meekly said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word;" so each one's cross may be designed by God, to be the training needed to discipline him into the Christ-like temper and disposition essential to his salvation.

As we look back over our past lives, we often see how much better God's ways were for us, than what we proposed or desired ourselves; and in our future lives we shall doubtless praise and adore Him for things we mourned over here. The Angel brought from God the name Jesus, for Mary's child; it was a common Hebrew name, but fully designated the office He was to fulfill; and this familiar name was in perfect keeping with the Divine humility which characterized His whole earthly life. After this annunciation, Mary is hardly mentioned in the Gospel; but while she was hidden from the world, the Saviour of the world was secretly and silently forming in her, until the night when the angels announced His birth at Bethlehem.



CHAPTER IV.

THE TIME OF CHRIST'S COMING.

Creation and time had a mystical relation to the incarnation of the Son of God. His human nature came out of the elements of matter, and in the course of time; and from Creation, Revelation and the Incarnation, have come all we know of God, and our own origin and future eternal life.

A thousand years in God's sight are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. Time is a sequence of creation,—days, weeks, months and years represent only motion or procession of thought, and come from the motion of the planets; without that there would be no time, but one everlasting now. The Son of God was incarnate, to perfect creation by its redemption; when that is finished time will be no more, and its whole course will be an epoch of eternity.

St. Paul said, "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law;" and our world's history shows that from creation all the great events in the development of man and nations, were a series of preparations for the incarnation; and when God's plans and purposes were accomplished, the angels announced Jesus' birth.

The time and manner of Christ's coming was so paradoxically revealed, and the nature and design of His mission, that

He might be received by faith, and that when the prophecies were fulfilled there would be no doubt of His person; like many divergent rays of truth they concentrated to fulfillment in Him. And now we see that God's mysterious way was best to furnish to all future generations, such evidence of His Messiahship as no reasonable mind could doubt, and no ingenuity of man controvert.

Looking back to the history of mankind before Christ, we see that God first tried them without a written law, by oral commands and a long life, so that they might be easily transmitted by tradition; but this failed to restrain them from sin and temporal ruin; then the experiment was made on one nation, with a written law and ritual of worship, which made the people superior to other nations; but it did not save them from idolatry and rebellion against God, until they were so judicially blind, respecting the prophecies they preserved of the Messiah, that they rejected Him and caused His crucifixion.

Jesus came to die for the sins of the world; and the Jews prepared themselves, in spite of God's mercies to their forefathers, and of Christ's testimony to them by His words and works, to crucify Him. But all those preparations were essential for the development of the new era, and new covenant in Christ's blood, which were to revolutionize the world; to introduce a reign of God on earth, through the Holy Ghost, raise mankind to a higher moral and spiritual condition, and a new civilization, science, and freedom, such as had never before existed. And there was no time from Adam to Christ, so appropriate to accomplish God's purposes of love and mercy for us men in Jesus' birth, as the beginning of the era which bears His name; because His birth is rooted into time, and that has helped to transmit, through all the Christian centuries, the truth that the long expected Messiah did then come.

That fullness of time had proved that, with all that God

had done to teach and help mankind, they were yet in a deplorable condition, and needed some further help from Him; all human governments were despotisms, and the people were groaning for deliverance from bondage to their sins and oppressors. Hardly greater wretchedness can be imagined than was universal when Jesus was born.

The masses of the people were serfs and slaves, and had no rights their rulers respected—notwithstanding the theory of Roman Law, which guaranteed justice to its humblest citizens; might and money made the poor powerless to get redress. The Government of Rome was unstable; one military despot after another was assassinated to give place to the next ambitious usurper; the rich were murdered for their money; Nero murdered his own mother long after Christ's birth; women were degraded and shameless, and ladies of the highest rank exposed their persons to please Nero; human passions were unrestrained among all classes, and public and private dishonesty was almost universal; and so dismal was the state of society, that some good men committed suicide to escape its horrors.

All the foundations of social, domestic, and civil order, swayed under the convulsions of a corrupted and perishing world. The sense of insecurity and peril was universal, and the moral darkness which covered the people made them groan for deliverance from its worn out Paganism and dissoluteness, and proved how deeply a Saviour was needed. Nevertheless, the way had been preparing for centuries along with the growing corruptions, which made the people feel the need of a Deliverer and for His coming;—by the cultivation of letters, by the apotheosis of their great men by several nations, by the beginning of a reliable historical epoch, by the conquest of Palestine by the Romans, by the universal spread of the knowledge of the Greek language; and the very men like Herod, and Pilate, Caiaphas and Judas, as well as the Blessed Virgin, and Zacharias,

and the Apostles and Evangelists, were preparations for the Incarnation of the Son of God; and without these good and bad men of that generation, His mission could not have been accomplished as it was.

The little country of Palestine, and the subjected nation of the Jews, were the only place and people where the true God was known and worshipped; and the rulers then had so perverted His revelation, that Christ denounced them as hypocrites and whited sepulchres; and they rejected and crucified Him. All the rest of the world was in Pagan darkness, with its Buddhism, Brahminism, Pantheism, the Precepts of Confucius, and Zoroaster, and Fetichism; and there were five hundred false gods worshipped in Rome, and described with vices which degrade and disgrace men.

The grand civilization of Assyria, Egypt, and the East, and the classic culture of Greece and Rome, had done but little to elevate men morally or socially; and Christianity came as a healer of all the evils under which men groaned, and to lift them to a higher civilization as well as religious state. The natural compassion of a common humanity, that moves to pity and relieve the suffering and diseased, had caused rulers in Egypt, India and Greece, centuries before Christ, to provide means to alleviate such cases; something like the attendance of physicians at modern dispensaries, and places of resort for lepers; but there were no hospitals with medical skill, tender nursing, and means to ease suffering such as came with Christianity. And, it is said, that the first hospital ever built with these ends in view, was at Bethlehem where Jesus was born. Before Christ, penitentiaries were used not to reform, but punish and harden criminals; and instead of restoring them to society and a better life, they were turned out to prey with greater hatred on the world; and the dangerous classes were held in check by punishments that were cruel and inadequate. In St. Paul's day, because a slave

murdered his master, a whole plantation of men, women and children were put to death; and one emperor fed his fish with the flesh of a slave.

Thus, it was, after God had tried mankind for four thousand years, and showed their incapacity for self-government, and that even with a written revelation, and priesthood, and Church, they could not save themselves from moral and temporal ruin, without some further help from Him; that was the fullness of time, when He chose to send His Son in a human nature, to show men how to live a true manhood, and to furnish the means to help others to live like Him, to restore them from death, and exalt them to an eternal life with Him in heaven.

Men saw the need of such a Saviour, felt that none but God could deliver the world from its crushing evils; and then Jesus came as the second Adam, to show how grand and perfect the first Adam originally was; how men, by following His example, could become like Him; and established His Church, and sent the Holy Spirit to help them; and finally, to gradually dispell the moral darkness of the world, and the evils of society, exalt men to a higher civilization here, and fit them for His kingdom in heaven hereafter; and last, not least, destroy Satan's power throughout the universe, every where but in the one little prison of Hell.

Civil and sacred history, and Gentile traditions, as well as the Gospel and classical writers, testify to a general expectation of the appearance of an extraordinary person [as about to appear] in the reign of the Roman Emperor Cæsar Augustus,—which began B. C 30, and ended A. D. 14. The expectation existed, therefore, not only in Palestine and the Roman Empire, but also among the eastern nations; Tacitus, Suetoneus, and Virgil testify to the expectation in the West; and the coming of the Magi to inquire, “where is He born who is king of the Jews,” testify to its existence in the East.

And now, on this fact, that the Son of God was incarnate in our nature, "made man," lived and died on earth, rose from the dead, ascended to Heaven, and is glorified in the God-head, depends all revealed religion; because, as St. Paul says,—if Christ be not risen, Christian hope is a delusion, and there is no ground to hope for a resurrection from the dead, nor of any future life, or glory in Heaven.

We see, also, how a good preparation had been made at the time when Christ came. If He had come in any century when Assyria, and Babylon or Egypt were in their glory, they would have transmitted no historical records of any great value, and but fragments of written history; and had Christ come in a barbarous age or country, where there were no men of learning, and nothing but a barbarous dialect, to transmit by tradition the records of His life and mission, the evidence would have been hardly convincing to the next generation.

But, when Christ came, all the ancient civilizations and literature had been poured into the laps of Greece and Rome, and raised to a higher stage; and one more capable of transmission, uncorrupted than had ever before existed. The Greek and Latin languages had reached their highest perfection, and were better adapted than any preceding tongues to express the spiritual doctrines, revealed by Christ; and were essential to the new era of enlightenment, which was to begin in and with Christ, and were vehicles best suited to preserve and transmit the truths of Christianity.

Though the Aramean, a dialect of the Syriac, was the vernacular of the people of Palestine when Christ came, yet the Hellenistic was common in almost the whole Western world, and was spoken by Christ; and the Gospels, excepting St. Matthew's, were probably written in that Greek, and exactly as we now have them. And it was better adapted than

any existing language, to express the higher thoughts, emotions, and spiritual truths Christ came to reveal.

And the hand of God is plainly seen in all, that in the preparations as well as the prophecies, and the time when, and the place where, Jesus was born. His coming was delayed, until the very men were born, who had felt the power of that civilization, and could express themselves in the dialect of Alexandria; and in words and thoughts not only understood by the most cultivated people on earth, but, which was destined also to be forever the study and delight of scholars, and in which Christ's words were to be stereotyped, and last until His second coming.

And again the hand of God is more plainly seen by us who look back at what the world then was, and compare it with what it now is; and see that Christianity, penetrating the now Christian nations, has wrought the changes visible in their life, and inward character; modified and humanized their governments, enlarged the freedom of the people, elevated woman, provided for orphans, and the alleviation of all human suffering; and introduced the graces of Christian benevolence and refinement, and made Christendom the glory of our world: where Christ is acknowledged its King, and Christendom is His Kingdom; and where His army of soldiers three hundred million strong, after nineteen centuries, are going forth to other nations conquering and to conquer, and laying down their lives for Him, in obedience to His command; and are gathering the Gentiles into His Kingdom, doing it most effectually by means of the Christian enlightenment that has produced our modern science, inventions, and discoveries.

All the prophets and philosophers taught before Christ, concerning the nobility of man's nature, and the glory for which God created him, was but the shadow of the substance, and higher revelations made by Him.



CHAPTER V.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

When Cæsar Augustus had gathered all the power of the Roman Republic into his hands, and the Empire was at peace, and all the world was expecting some extraordinary event, four years before Anno Domini, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in the reign of King Herod.

Augustus had issued a decree that all the world should be taxed; and Joseph went to Bethlehem with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child, to be taxed; while there, she was delivered of her first born son. And the angel of the Lord appeared to the Shepherds, and said: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born, this day in the City of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." And they went to Bethlehem, saw the child, and repeated the angel's message.

Attempts have been made to discredit St. Luke's narrative, because he says the taxing was made when Cyrenius was Governor of Syria; whereas, Varrus was Governor when Jesus was born, and Cyrenius was appointed eleven years after. The enrollment may then have begun, and its completion and the collection of the taxes may have been first made so much later; which is highly probable, if we consider the lack of speedy

communication, and that the empire extended from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, and from the Rhine and Danube to Mt. Atlas and the Falls of the Nile, and consisted of twenty-five Provinces.

Both the Empire and the decree were part of God's preparation for Jesus' birth. His mother's home was at Nazareth; and had He been born there, Micah's prophecy of Bethlehem would have failed; the Romans kept their archives with great care, and recorded important events on brass,—and Tertullian appealed to them to prove Christ's condemnation and death.

In those ways God provided, that the world should have unimpeachable witness, outside of the Gospel and Disciples of Christ, to prove that Jesus, who was born at Bethlehem, was the King of the Jews,—as Pilate persisted He was, in the inscription over His cross.

Look, again, at St. Matthew's narrative. He was a Jew, collector of the revenue for the Romans, but became Christ's disciple, lived three years with Him, was empowered to teach and work miracles, and suffered martyrdom for his faith in Him; and wrote from personal knowledge, or, possibly, from the Blessed Virgin's own words, showing his countrymen that their prophecies were fulfilled in Him; and he corroborates St. Luke's narrative, and says that He came "to save the people from their sins."

He says Jesus was born in the days of Herod the king, because it was customary to connect remarkable events with the reign in which they occurred; and as Herod died three years before Anno Domini, he helps to fix the date of Christ's birth; and he perfectly identifies Him with many remarkable prophecies, tracing His descent from Abraham; while St. Luke wrote later and for Gentiles, and his genealogy traces the Blessed Virgin's ancestry through David, Abraham and Noah to Adam,—the father of mankind.

All that is recorded respecting the thoughts or feelings of the Virgin Mother, respecting her Miraculous Child, until He was twelve years old and went with her to the Passover at Jerusalem, is, "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

Here, then, is the joint testimony of Hebrew Shepherds, Roman Archives, of Holy angels, and Christ's Evangelists and Apostles, and the name of the Christian Era, that the child Jesus, who was born of the Virgin Mary, at Bethlehem, was the long expected Messiah, the Son of God, and Saviour of the world. And it looks as if it were impossible to give testimony in any way more likely to convince mankind that Jesus—so foretold, so conceived and so born—was any other than the seed of the woman, and the Son of God.

Notwithstanding this strong basis of sacred and civil history, on which the birth of Jesus rests, there are cultivated minds, at least in science, that reject the belief of any Incarnation of a Divine Person in Him; and regard the Gospel History as a Christian legendary story of Judea, originated in an age when there was great credulity, and little criticism, and that Christ's superhuman life and miracles are only inventions of His disciples; which, if not intended to deceive others, were results only of their own deception, and grouped around Him as the wonderful being He appeared to be to the unsophisticated Disciples—who believed in Him, and recorded them. But their misled intelligence is readily proved false, by fair criticism; and it is chiefly a lack of the full knowledge of revealed truth, which leads such minds astray.

Men who study only matter, and the forces and laws of nature, and believe nothing they cannot understand or demonstrate, are incapable of interpreting God's written revelation; because it is presented to our faith, and can be understood in no other way. Indeed, St. Paul says, it is true also of God's physical revelation,

“By faith we understand that the worlds were made;” and no study of the laws of matter will tell the student who their maker was; without revelation it is impossible to imagine that the world ever had a beginning, or any Creator, but its own laws. Hence, such men can never be safe guides respecting anything revealed by God, and addressed solely to our faith; for, however much we can learn of nature’s laws, without faith we are compelled to admit that from nature alone their Author is unknowable.

If conceit and self-sufficiency persuade a few men to believe that they are wiser than the majority of intelligent and well educated men of Christendom, because they doubt the prophecies of the Old Testament, and deny their exact fulfillment in the New Testament—in the miraculous conception, the birth, supernatural life, and the well attested death, resurrection and ascension of Christ to Heaven—how can they explain the fulfillment of Christ’s prophecies, which for nineteen centuries have been unfolding in the progress and development of men and nations, mentally and morally?

The absolute truth of Christianity is proven by the history of Christian civilization, and by the experience of individual men for all these Christian centuries; and the whole tenor of human faith and philosophy is the reasonableness of Christianity, and the unshakable historical basis on which it rests. And it must be by strict criticism of the world’s past history, and its present condition, that we shall attain the best knowledge of the probability of the truth of the Bible, as a revelation from the God who made us, and our world, and has directed and controlled all the great events here; for no study of the laws of nature, or investigation of its forces, or the elements and molecules of matter, can tell us who or what God is; or how He would reveal His attributes of wisdom, love and mercy to His intelligent creatures.

God has made a created and written and incarnate revelation to man, and they come to us as parts of one grand whole. The first visible sight we see, is the earth and the heavens; and the first words we read in revelation are, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Both revelations are full of mysterious laws and invisible forces; each one helps to explain the other. Without the Bible man never could have known that creation had a beginning; and the difficulty with unbelievers is, that they look at only one side of Divine revelation, and attempt to interpret the whole from that imperfect view. It is impossible now, with our vastly increased facilities for investigating the laws of nature, and all our experience, learned from fulfilled prophecies, to forecast future events, respecting the world's development, or the destiny of nations. And the loftiest genius, and most poetically inspired imagination, never could have conceived of that succession of human events, which foretold and prepared the way for Christ's birth, or for the revelation He made that there are three Divine Persons in the Godhead, or that it was possible for the incarnation of one of them, which things never were understood until Christ revealed them.

Again, how could a false Christ institute a religion which denounces all falsehood, and demands truth and righteousness from its disciples? A religion that experience proves creates men of the highest types of manhood, and of the purest morals, and produces the highest social, civil and domestic happiness. A religion that has been the consolation of millions in the sufferings, sorrows, and trials of life, and an unfailing support in death for nineteen centuries. How could a false Christ ordain a ministry, and institute a Church to teach men to be true and righteous, and give the world His words, which show that His life was holy, and as an example for all mankind; and a ritual into which are inwoven the story of His miraculous conception, His birth, and all the extraordinary events of His earthly life,

and palm this on the world, and have it received, and used to worship Him as God, by millions of the wisest, best and most cultivated of our race? How could His disciples incorporate into that Liturgy, called by St. Paul, "A Form of Sound Words," before the death of St. John, a festival, called Christmas, to commemorate the birth of Jesus, which has been ever since celebrated; and, as we know, from certain history, on the 25th day of December, ever since A. D. 137? How account for the chronology of the new Christian era, dating from Christ's birth, which history teaches is more than fourteen centuries old, and now accepted by all Christendom, if Jesus never was born at Bethlehem, in the days of Herod, and the reign of Augustus,—and He is only a Mythical Person? And last, not least, how shall we account for the mighty revolutions and regeneration, which has been ever since going on in the western world, and the extension of the force and light in Christendom to other nations, elevating them wherever they are introduced, raising them above any people that lived before Christ? And how explain the difference of character between men in Christendom who believe in Christ and practice His religion, and those who deny that such a Person ever lived, and follow only their own wills and corrupt ways? Until these questions can be answered more satisfactorily than they have yet been, the best and most enlightened men and nations will continue to believe that the child Jesus, born at Bethlehem, in the beginning of the Christian era, was "very God of very God," the long expected Saviour of our world.

When we consider the mysteries which now enshroud the forces and laws of matter, and of our present life, and how God yet hides Himself, and after all the manifestations He has made in revelation, creation and His incarnation, and of our mysterious relation to Him—and the material world into which our bodies enter by our birth and death—we cannot but believe that God

devised the best way possible to convince such beings as we are of the truth of our Lord's incarnation. And the reasonableness and probability of the whole plan is seen, because all the parts and events are in perfect harmony; and as we attempt to penetrate the manifestations of His power and wisdom in the laws of nature, we find similar mysteries and bounds to our investigation that we encounter in the written revelation, and in our own being. And this is conclusive proof, that the God who created us was incarnate to redeem us, and was born of the Virgin Mary; and whoever will not believe it on such testimony as God has given us, would not believe it on any testimony He could give. It is not probable that they would have believed, because the incarnation was, and must forever be, the next greatest mystery to man after God and creation; and, as it has proved, the greatest blessing God has ever given man; and the highest token of His love and mercy towards us; and the strongest reason we have to love, believe in and adore Him; therefore, it is probable that any other mode chosen by Him would have failed to overcome their unbelief.





CHAPTER VI.

JESUS' CIRCUMCISION AND PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

Our World's History testifies, in an unbroken stream of blood, from Adam's first sacrifice, until the last great sacrifice of Christ, that there is no remission of sins without shedding of blood.

God's first covenant with man, for the forgiveness of sins, was in the blood of animals, which looked by faith to Christ's atonement. His second covenant was in man's own blood by circumcision, which was a higher symbol of Christ's blood, as the Son of Man; and this continued until Christ came; and the last covenant is in His own blood; for the night before His crucifixion, in the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, He said of the Cup: "This is my blood of the New Covenant," as if it were the completion of the sacrament of baptism.

The first covenant was the germ from which the last one was developed, and was to last until the world's end; and they are correlated as mysteriously as the great forces in nature, because the first two were types of the Blood of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world for the remission of its sins.

When Jesus was eight days old, He was circumcised according to the law; and the name Jesus was given Him, as He

was so named by the Angel. This was His covenant name, and signified to all who received it circumcision of the heart; and the cutting off the corruptions of the flesh, inherited from Adam, and justifying the receiver by faith in a coming Messiah; and the faith of the parents was the ground of justification; and they were responsible to God to see their children trained for Him, until they were old enough to take their vows on themselves.

The name Jesus signifies His office, "for He shall save His people from their sins." The original name was Oshea; but Moses added to it Jah, one of the titles of the Son of God,—and contracted to Joshua, with a Greek termination it means "God will save us."

These little mysterious details, and correlated links in Jesus' name and history, and the long chain of prophecies which preceded His birth, exactly correspond to the mysteries in the laws and forces of nature; and so assure us that the God of creation and revelation is one God.

But why should Jesus, if He was sinless, submit to a rite which signified the remission of sins? The reason is revealed, that as He took a human nature into His Divine nature, as the Son of Man, He came to fulfill the Law, and restore by His obedience what Adam lost by disobedience; and His first act was the painful shedding of His own blood; and it was the beginning of perfect obedience, and atoning blood-shedding, which were to perfect His human nature, and make propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

The first Adam's sin destroyed his original righteousness, lost him God's favor, and introduced suffering and death into this world. Now, the obedience and suffering of the second Adam were to bring righteousness and eternal life to all mankind, who would believe and obey Him; and the covenant of circumcision had been two thousand years looking to His com-

ing to abolish it and institute a better one, with better helps to keep it.

Moreover, the first Adam was created an adult, and so was no example for children; and would not have been, had he maintained his original righteousness. But the second Adam was created an infant, and passed through infancy and childhood sinless; and through all the stages of life a holy man, to be an example in all. And His circumcision was the key note to His whole life, for he said: "I came not to do My own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me; and I do always the things that are pleasing to Him." The rite bound the child to take his covenant on himself, as soon as he was old enough to understand it; and this Jesus did when He was twelve years old.

By the Mosaic Law every mother giving birth to a male child "shall continue in the blood of her purifying eight days," until her child was entered into covenant with God by circumcision; and for "thirty-three days more she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary;" but when the days of her purification are ended, she shall bring a yearling lamb for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtle dove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, unto the priest; who shall offer it before the Lord, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be clean from the issue of blood. "And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons—one for a burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering, and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean."

In obedience to the law, when the mother's purification was ended, she carried Jesus to Jerusalem, when He was forty days old, and presented Him to the Lord. The pains of child-birth being part of the penalty for Eve's disobedience, and entailed on her posterity; the sacrifice of the lamb or doves was an acknowl-

edgement of her personal demerit, and an emblematical transfer of her guilt and its penalties to the victim slain.

That taking of Jesus to the Temple, to be presented to the Lord, fulfilled Malachi's prophecy, "The Lord shall come suddenly to His Temple;" for the first place Jesus visited after His birth was the Temple, which He had come to glorify and to abolish its worship.

There was also a further act of obedience to the law, in presenting Jesus in the Temple, because every male child was required to be presented to the Lord, and redeemed from the priestly office and Temple service, by the payment of five shekels—about three and three-quarter dollars—which service was first performed at the Tabernacle.

This incident also has a profound interest, showing the intimate relations of the three great stages of the development of Christianity; the priesthood of the primitive Church was appointed by God in every first-born son, who was to offer sacrifice, and minister before Him; and the priestly son was a type of God's only Son, and His eternal priesthood, and also of the unity of the Godhead, under which He first revealed Himself to man. "The Lord our God is one Lord." And this lasted for twenty-five centuries, until Moses' time.

Then God came down on Mount Sinai, and reformed the priesthood and ritual—the three-fold priesthood being a type of the Holy Trinity, and of the Christian priesthood Christ would institute. And to show the connection between the two dispensations, and preserve the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead, the law for the redemption of the first-born was made.

In these mystical ways, God was four thousand years preparing for Christ's coming to the Temple as its Lord; and fulfilling Haggai's prophecy, "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former." Because the glory of the Lord's invisible presence filled Solomon's Temple, but the

Temple built by Herod was glorified by the visible presence of God's incarnate Son; by the miracles He wrought there; and by the Father's voice from Heaven, declaring Him His Son.

And this act is memorable, from the double witness of two devout Israelites—the first, after the angels, to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. Simeon was expecting the Messiah, for the Holy Ghost revealed to Him that He should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ; and, when Jesus was in the Temple, he took Him in his arms, and blessed God that he had seen His salvation—"Prepared before all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people, Israel!" And his anthem has ever since been a precious treasure of Christ's Church. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary, "Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul, also." She lived to see the prophecy painfully fulfilled.

Meanwhile, a new witness appeared in the prophetess Anna. As Simeon finished his prophecy, she came in and thanked the Lord; and spake of Jesus to all them, who looked for redemption in Israel.

When the parents had performed all things, according to the Law, they returned to Nazareth; and there they remained until the next great events in Jesus' life—of the visit of the Magi, and His flight into Egypt.

Mary's example in presenting her Child to the Lord is a lesson for all mothers; and the great and good men of all times have been trained by pious mothers. Hannah took her child Samuel to the Lord's Tabernacle, to devote him to His service: Elisabeth was the miraculous mother of the Baptist, because she was righteous; and Mary, highly favored by God, to be the Mother of Jesus, because of her righteousness. Christianity had its earthly origin from those pious mothers, and their examples

should inspire all mothers to faithfulness in training their children.

The Blessed Virgin's place in Theology is between the two extremes of an immaculate conception and disrespect. The idea of her perpetual virginity is pleasing to an esoteric mind; and God could easily have maintained it had He chosen so to do, and there would be no difficulty in believing it, did the Gospel so teach.

But there is no prophecy giving such an intimation, and no words in the Gospel teaching that any special reverence be paid her; and the fact that she offered the sin offering of the law for her purification, proves that she is included in Adam's sinful race; and the saying, "Joseph knew her not until she brought forth her *first born Son*," warrants the belief that she afterward had children.

If marriage was not a sacred appointment by God, there might be some probability of her perpetual maidenhood; and no special honor is assigned her in the Gospel, except "all nations shall call her blessed." And neither the Epistles, Creeds, nor the Epistles of Clement and Polycarp—both ordained by the Apostles—nor the Œcumenical Councils say anything of her immaculateness, or perpetual virginity, or of any worship to be paid her; and these things are not even sacred traditions, because it was nearly three centuries after Christ before they were so broached.

The four Evangelists speak of Jesus' brothers and sisters, not cousins or relatives, as the Jews often used the words; but uterine relatives. And Christ's ever cautious words to His mother shows that He foresaw the idolatry in the future, and warned against it. And His words to her at Cana: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" though not disrespectful, according to their common usage, declare that she had no part in His Messianic work. And again, when He was told His mother and

brethren desired to speak with Him, He said: "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother;" showing that discipleship to Him is as great an honor as being His mother. She belonged to the old Dispensation, was eminent for her righteousness, which was of the law; in her that righteousness ended, to spring again to the spiritual righteousness of the Gospel, by faith in her immaculate Son.

The three views now held of the Blessed Virgin's place, are: First, that she is the immaculate mother of the Son of God, entitled to worship, and our intercessor in Heaven; but Christ is the only one born of woman in Heaven, and she is in Paradise. Second, Mary was only a pure and pious Jewess, chosen to be the mother of Christ, and entitled to no more reverence than any great benefactor of our race. Third, that she was the holiest woman under the law, the Virgin mother of God's incarnate Son, and ever to be remembered and loved; this view the Holy Catholic Church has embodied in her Creed, and held from the Apostles' time to our own. And while the Church neither invokes her intercession, nor worships her, she fulfills the Gospel requirement "to call her Blessed" by two great yearly festivals in her honor.

The expectations of a Virgin, to give the world a son, its Saviour, sustained the heart and hopes of God's people four thousand years; and ever since the belief, that the Blessed Virgin was the mother of Christ, has helped to confirm men's faith in Him, and to spread His religion.





CHAPTER VII.

VISIT OF THE MAGI.

St. Matthew is the only Evangelist who mentions the visit of the wise men of the East to Jesus, saying, "in Herod's reign they came to worship Him, as the King of the Jews." Herod died before Jesus was two years old, and this is all known of the time.

The term Magi affords no clue to discover from whence they came, because the name was common to a sect of philosophers in Chaldea, Media, Persia, Syria, Greece and Rome; and Cicero says, "in Persia they comprised a college that assembled monthly, and no man could be king who did not belong to the order; they interpreted dreams and prophecies, and directed public affairs."

The sect was widely spread; and all that is known of these men is, that they were Gentiles; and their coming to Jerusalem shows that they knew the Hebrew prophecies, and helped to confirm them, and that Jesus was their Messiah; and they make an important link in the chain of testimony, that the birth of Jesus was expected by Gentile nations as well as the Jews; because the Psalmist said, "The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring presents, and the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts," it is supposed the Magi were these persons; but the tradi-

tion—that they were kings descended from Noah—(which all mankind now are) is not older than the fourth century.

Whether the wonders attending Jesus' annunciation and birth had reached the people the Magi represented or not, their coming is important testimony to confirm the Gospel; because it is incidental, and was not inserted to corroborate it. While their report to Herod, that they had come to worship Jesus implied only—that Oriental reverence paid to kings; and it aroused his fears lest He would be a rival for his throne. And the people were troubled because they knew his horrid character, and probably feared the slaughter that followed.

And their inquiry for the king of the Jews, shows that they expected Herod would be as glad as themselves that the Saviour was born; and the star, they saw in the East, identified the child they sought with both Hebrew and Gentile prophecies. For Balaam in Mesopotamia fifteen centuries before, and Isaiah in Israel eight centuries before, had foretold the Messiah—as a star out of Jacob, and a light to lighten the Gentiles, “and that kings should come to the brightness of His rising.”

The appeal of the Magi to Herod, and his appeal to the Council of the Jews, to learn where Christ would be born, are important testimony to the identity of Jesus, and the fulfillment of prophecy. When they learned that Bethlehem was the place, Herod charged them to find the Child, and bring him word that he might come and worship Him.

Herod's attempt to deceive the wise men was frustrated, because the Holy Child was in the keeping of the King of Kings. And thus the prophecy was fulfilled, in this first enmity shown to the child Jesus, that “the kings of the earth take counsel together against the Lord and His anointed;” because Herod acted in the interests of Augustus as well as himself.

The star that led the Magi to Jerusalem, there disappeared; and appeared again when they departed to seek Jesus, and went

before them until it stood over the house where He was. It had the appearance of a star, but prophecy said it would be a new light. "A star shall arise." It was a miraculous temporary orb sent by God for a special purpose. If it had been a planet of our solar system, it would have been remembered by Jew and Gentile forever; and it was no planetary conjunction—because in leading the men to Jerusalem, it moved in a northwest rly direction, and in going to Nazareth where Jesus was, its course was due north; and no known conjunction of planets could have caused such motions.

It is certain Jesus was not at Bethlehem, because St. Luke says, forty days after birth He was taken to Jerusalem, and went from there to His home at Nazareth, where he remained until the flight into Egypt — more than a year. Entering the house, the Magi, as representatives of the Gentile world, worshipped Jesus as the King of the Jews, and the long-expected Saviour of the world. The offerings they made expressed their faith in His royalty as King; in His Divinity, as the anointed of God; and in His priesthood and sacrifice, He had come to inaugurate and offer.

The Magi, warned in a dream by God not to return to Herod, departed to their own country another way. If they had found Jesus at Bethlehem, the warning would not have been needed; but if He were at Nazareth, it was important, as history proves, that they should not report it to Herod. Otherwise, the children of Nazareth would have been slaughtered; and the prophecy of Jeremiah—of Rachel weeping for her children—would have failed of fulfillment; and the first martyr witnesses for Jesus, would not have been at Bethlehem.

Herod's order to kill all children from two years and under, "according to the time that he diligently inquired of the wise men," proves that Jesus was neither recently born, nor at Bethlehem. But his atrocious murder of the infants, is histo-

rical confirmation of the birth of Jesus—the Messiah of the Jews, and Saviour of mankind; and they were prototypes of the painful way His mission in their human nature would end; and they have ever since been witnesses, that Jesus was born in the days of Herod the king.

The historical character of that debauched old king, proves that he would be likely to do such an atrocious deed. His reign of forty years had been a series of plunder, and murder, and brutality; he had strangled a wife, murdered a son, and high priest who was his relative; and burned and drowned nobles, so that Jewish ambassadors to the Roman Emperor declared, that “survivors, during his life time, were more miserable than the sufferers;” and the blood of the innocents of Bethlehem, was but a drop in comparison with the stream that flowed through his reign.

The murderers must have been many, and their work nearly simultaneous; and the wail of anguish from the bereaved mothers, was predicted by their great ancestress Rachel, who died in travail there seventeen centuries before, and was buried at Bethlehem; the wail of agony by the dying mother, “by a beautiful poetic figure, was said to weep passionately for her offspring, because she beheld them torn from her.” This slaughter was caused by the report of the Scribes to Herod and the Magi, and that all children under two years were slain; Jesus must then have been more than one year old, and Herod’s death soon after confirms it. All these details concentrate like so many rays to a focus to prove the certainty of the birth of Christ, as the expected Messiah.

There is no record of the death of any man whose end was more wretched than Herod’s, or more certainly by direct visitation from God; while he was sinking in intolerable anguish, from a loathsome disease, the corruption of the grave was already begun in him: and he spent the last weeks of his life in

savage frenzy; tortured by a guilty conscience, surrounded by hating and plotting sons, and thieving slaves, and a detesting people, knowing his death was near, and that no tears would be shed for him; as the last act of his infamous life he ordered, under penalty of death, that some of the principle families of his Kingdom should come to Jericho; and shutting them in the Hippodrome, he secretly commanded his sister Salome to have them massacred as soon he died. And so still plotting blood shedding, while dying, he passed into the Kingdom of the dead; but his dying order was not executed. The people were so glad of his death that they instituted a festival to rejoice for it. His sons died in infamy, or exile, and before the century ended his name was extinct.

As soon as the Magi departed, the Angel of the Lord warned Joseph, in a dream, of Herod's evil intentions toward Jesus, and the family departed to Egypt; the intercourse between Palestine and Egypt had been frequent for centuries, and they had only to pass the boundaries between the two countries, and they would be safe from Herod's power. And there were two causes for this flight; one, to save Jesus from Herod's power; the other, to fulfill the prophecy, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." This looked as if the Messiah were to be born there; but is another link in the mystical chain of prophecy, which is so like the laws of nature, that it also helps to confirm our belief that one God is the author of both.

No Evangelist tells where Jesus abode in Egypt, nor how long He lived there; but tradition says it was near Cairo; and the time of His return, in Archelaus reign, renders it probable that He was there not many months; because Herod died within two years after Jesus' birth, and his son's reign began.

When Herod was dead, the Angel of the Lord again appeared to Joseph in a dream, telling him to return: "for they are dead who sought the young child's life." The Greek is *to*

paidion, which shows Jesus was not an infant; and His departure from Egypt was before His abode there would be remembered, or exert any influence on His mind. The time, apparently, was near the Passover; and so as a descendant of Israel, He was called out of Egypt, by God, as His earthly ancestors were fifteen centuries before; but when Joseph came to Palestine, and heard Archelaus reigned, he was afraid to go to Nazareth. And well he might be; because in the beginning of his reign he murdered three thousand of his subjects, and the country was infested with lawless men and robbers; but God told him, in a dream, to go to Galilee.

Galilee had been a long time the abode, or resort, of Phœnecians, Arabs, Greeks, and Romans to such an extent, that it was called Galilee of the Gentiles; and to its little town of Nazareth Joseph went; and there Jesus passed His childhood, youth, and manhood, in obscurity, until He began His public ministry. And prophecy said Christ would be called a Nazarine, though it did not name Nazareth; but the Hebrew word Nezer, from which the name was derived, means also a branch; and several prophets call Christ "the Branch, and He shall grow up out of His place;" and Pilate's last witness for Christ was putting the inscription over His head, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews;" and by all these occult ways, God chose to furnish future generations powerful proofs that He was the Messiah, and the Son of God, the Saviour.

The name was applied to Christ, because He is the Branch who grew up at Nazareth; and not because He was a Nazarine, a sect of the Jews, to which the Baptist belonged, for He never belonged to it. The town was contemned by the Jews, generally; and when Philip told Nathaniel that Jesus of Nazareth was the Prophet foretold by Moses, he asked: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" And the Scribes urged it to Nicodemus, that Christ could not be Messiah, "for out of

Galilee ariseth no prophet." Nazarine was given as a term of reproach to Christ and His disciples; but He was not ashamed of it, but applied it to Himself after His resurrection, and appointed Galilee as the place to meet His disciples; for He foresaw how the name would help to confirm men's faith in Him.





CHAPTER VIII.

JESUS' BOYHOOD.

St. Luke is the only Evangelist who says anything of Jesus' childhood, after his return from Egypt until his twelfth year, "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and the grace of God was upon Him."

What God has concealed, I would not lift the veil from were it possible. But there is a lesson in it. For what is revealed in a mystery, is designed to exercise our faith and intellect. And it is the same in His revelation in nature's laws and forces. By investigation we perceive God's wisdom, and there is a wonderful harmony in all His revelations.

The little revealed of Jesus' boyhood proves that He was perfect, and such as might have been expected from His super-human manhood. The same mystery envelopes it as seen in His conception, and in who, or what, would be the seed of the woman.

And how unlike it is to human biographies, which relate all the earliest manifestations of genius in men who become famous; and it is especially unlike what might be expected from the men who wrote, after they had witnessed His extraordinary subsequent life, when they must have known the interest future generations would feel in every event of His earthly life. The

silence is so unhuman that it must have been directed by God; yet all is in perfect harmony with all the prophecies concerning Him. It proves how different God's ways are from man's; witnesses to the sincerity of the narrative; and is wonderful that nothing wonderful is related of His boyhood.

Whereas the Apocryphal Gospels relate many boyish miracles and fictitious acts, which convince us that the Evangelists wrote as they were directed by the Holy Ghost; because there is no attempt to make an interesting story of his boyhood, and no heralding of His coming glory as the Messiah; no promise of His wonderful works, or doctrines; and the little said is simple, and testifies that His life was holy.

And the way His youth is portrayed is evidence of the truth of the narrative; that it is neither invention nor fiction, but the fulfillment of the prophecy, referring to Christ's youth. "He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and a root out of dry ground." His early life, doubtless was like other village children of Nazareth; like other children he was born unconscious, and learned by observation and experience; impressed by the scenes and scenery around Him, in a lovely rural region, where He heard the languages and saw the costumes and customs of many countries, which influenced His mental development.

Yet St. Luke's saying, "the grace of God was in Him," denotes that He had another source of spiritual development not in other children; and its unconscious influences made Him innocent and holy as no other child was before or since. But there are no instances of the flashes of His Divine life, or mind, as there would have been had the Gospel been an invention, or even written by human direction, or to give reputation to a mythical person, or an imaginary Christ, to deceive the world; and yet it is exactly in accordance with all God's words and works—simple, natural, and as might be expected from the prophecies concerning Him. And in His childhood He would not be likely

to attract any more notice than any good and intelligent child, but He did; for He grew in favor with men, while, probably, His holy life and filial obedience were known only to His Blessed Mother.

When Jesus was twelve years old, His parents took Him to the Passover at Jerusalem, "after the custom of the feast." This is the next and last glimpse of His boyhood. Hebrew parents trained their children for confirmation; and, in that rite, they took their covenant vows on themselves; and, afterwards, were called Sons of the Law. The age of responsibility differs in children; and that Jesus was taken at twelve, denotes an early intellectual and religious development.

History says nothing of schools for children in Galilee. But Hebrew parents were required by the Law to instruct their children; and texts of Scripture were put up in their houses, and woven into their garments; and writing was chiefly confined to the Scribes. The neighbors testified after He began His mission, that He never attended schools, and wondered at His knowledge and learning; but his spiritual knowledge doubtless came by communication from His Divine nature, and that helped His human nature to other knowledge.

Jewish children, after confirmation, were taught some trade; and, as Jews and Egyptians commonly taught children the father's trade, Jesus learned from Joseph the trade of a carpenter; for the people asked, after He began His ministry, "Is not this the Carpenter, the Son of Mary?"

As Joseph and Mary returned from Jerusalem, after a day's journey, they missed Jesus, and went back to seek Him. From this incident, we learn the most extraordinary event in His early life; and the only words recorded that He spake until His thirtieth year. After three days, they found Him in the Temple, hearing the doctors and questioning them; and astonishing them by His wisdom and answers.

His mother asked why He had so dealt with them, and said, "Thy father and I have sought Thee, sorrowing." And He answered, in the mysterious words, "Do you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" A flood of light emanates from these words, as to His knowledge of His Divine nature; and it seems that, on the day He was confirmed, His human mind first became conscious of its union with His Divine nature: and of the nature of His mission in this world; and that not Joseph, but God, was His Father.

And the words must have recalled to the mother's mind Jesus' miraculous conception; the Angel's message, at His birth; and the wonders, at His presentation in the Temple—which she had treasured in her maternal heart, and with a mother's hope and ambition, pride and love. And she saw, with the quickness of her womanly and motherly instinct, that Jesus knew that Joseph—whom she called His father—was not His Father: nor the Father whose business He must be about.

And there is a lesson for all the world in the example of the parents and the Child. They entered Jesus into God's covenant when eight days old; took Him to the Temple, to be presented to the Lord in infancy, and to be confirmed at twelve; and used all the means God appointed in His law and Church, to train the Child righteously.

They did not wait for Jesus to be old enough to choose His religion—whether He would be Jew or Gentile—but used their authority to train Him, according to God's covenant. And it is a lesson for all parents telling them that training children in obedience to God's ways, is the way to God's favor and happiness here, and to His kingdom in heaven hereafter.

Thus Jesus hallowed His infancy and childhood with the beauty of holiness, and left His example for all children. The prophets had taught men, by God's command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." But they were sinners themselves, and their message was

lightly received; but Christ taught it all His life by His example.

This stage of Jesus' boyhood closed with these words, that His parents did not understand what He meant by His Father's business; but "He went down with them to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." There, the curtain fell. "He was subject to His parents; and thus gave the lessons to all children—of earnestness in doing God's will, and obedience to parents. "But His mother kept all these sayings in her heart." She knew she was the mother of a superhuman Child, knew He would be a Great Prophet, and hoped He might be the Messiah; but had to wait, in doubt, thirty years, until He began His public ministry.





CHAPTER IX.

JESUS' YOUTH AND MANHOOD.

This period includes the eighteen years of Jesus' life, between the twelfth and thirtieth years, which he spent at Nazareth, and prepared Himself for His Divine Mission. All the Evangelists, except St. Luke, pass it unnoticed; and while it is useless to speculate, on what God purposely conceals, it is not unprofitable to consider the rays of light that flash out in the few words respecting it; because all the mysteries of Divine revelation in creation, in the Bible, and incarnation are designed to awaken curiosity, and lead us to a fuller understanding of His works and ways, and are threads and clues to other mysteries. And the single sentence in St. Luke is like a torch in a dark cavern, that throws its light before, and enables us to penetrate further into its darkness. We learn from these few words, respecting Jesus' retired years at Nazareth, something of its results, and of God's reasons for it.

Indeed the hidderness of Jesus' life all those years, and the silence as to what He did, and said, and how He passed them, is exactly like the mystery which hung for four thousand years over the pophecy of the seed of the woman, and the mystery of the Messianic prophecies, and the mystery of His incarnation, and of the prophecies of Simeon and Anna, whose meaning was

unknown for thirty years; and like all the revelations God has made in the forces and laws of nature, and the mystery which still hides the time, and place, when and where Christ's second coming will be.

Jesus' retirement in Nazareth, was by God's direction, and part of His infinitely wise plan to prepare Him, as the Son of Man, for the great work He had come to accomplish as the Son of God; and it was a way to anticipate and remove any possible suspicion, that He owed His power and wisdom to human culture, or occult science obtained from man; He attended no school of the Prophets, or Rabbi's, and sat at the feet of no Gamaliel to prepare Him for His perfect triumph over the learned Scribes, Pharisees, Doctors, and Lawyers whose cunning and learning He singularly baffled.

Unrecognized and unknown as the Messiah, He had time and leisure to make such preparation as His human nature required, to fit Him for His earthly mission, and help the world to believe in Him as its God and Saviour. But it is revealed, that while Jesus was thus hidden, He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

The home where Jesus passed these hidden years was humble and poor, but it had a mother of angelic purity and piety, and a reputed father who trusted in God; and Jesus' own Divine nature—known only to Himself—made that house a place of such earthly love and peace as the world never before, nor since, has had. For, though the radiance of the Godhead was hidden in Jesus, the beauty of His holiness could not be concealed; though it might have been known by the blessed inmates—without their knowing the cause—because His brethren doubted His Messiahship, even after He began His teaching and miracles.

Jesus' human mind developed—like all others—by reflection and experience, by observation and study. Schools for

training the prophets had existed in Palestine, from the days of Samuel; and schools for training young men were established there a century before; but the probabilities are against Jesus ever attending them. The last words which announced His entrance into that dark period of retirement, and the astonishing words which He spake on emerging from it, are two ends in the links of an invisible chain, which help us to some reasonable conjectures as to what passed within it.

Because it is certain, He could never have come out of it, so thoroughly prepared for His first great mission, with such knowledge of men and things, and the Holy Scriptures, without some other preparation than His condition and surroundings furnished—prepared to confound by His logic, and to silence by His knowledge, the most learned men of His nation and times.

The influence of the lovely scenery, unsurpassed by any in the Holy Land,—which was visible from the neighborhood of Nazareth—and the mixed population of Galilee, have been mentioned as probably exerting an influence on His developing mind and manhood; for no one can grow up, amid such scenery of beauty and sublimity, without being impressed by it.

The little town of Nazareth was built on the side of a hill, which rises six hundred feet above the sea, and overlooks other distant mountains and lovely valleys. To the north lies a fertile plain, from which rises the woody hills of Naphtali; and beyond, on the far horizon, Hermon upheaves into the blue sky—the huge and splendid mass of his colossal shoulders, white with perpetual snow. Eastward—a few miles distant—is the great woody summit of Tabor, clothed with terebrinth and oak; and westerly is seen, through the pure air, the purple ridge of Carmel, and the dazzling line of white sand that fringes the Mediterranean sea; and southerly, in graceful outlines, are little Hermon, and Gilboa, and the famous plain of Esdraelon.

This region—where Jesus passed those eighteen years, and

prepared for his life work—was the heart of the land of Israel; and it was separated by only a narrow boundary of hills and streams from Phœnceia, Syria, Arabia, Babylonia and Egypt; and the Isles of the Gentiles, and the glorious region of Europe, were almost visible over the Western Sea. And Jesus was in the heart of the world He had come to save.

There Jesus grew to manhood, and there He labored as a carpenter, and forever hallowed manual labor—made it both honorable and glorious, as done by the hands of the Man, Who was in union with God, Who built the worlds. And there He acquired that earthly learning and wisdom, which enabled Him to emerge from its obscurity as a blazing meteor on the horizon of time; and to astonish the world with an astonishment, which has increased, in wonder and intensity, for nineteen centuries.

In all those years, Jesus lived and increased in knowledge, through the influence of the two spheres of His existence in His single Personality. His human nature was subject to all the limitations of matter, time and sense. He had the same feelings, the same hopes and fears, the same temptations, and desires; and vastly greater sorrows than other men. His life was all self-restraint, self-denial, and self-renunciation, such as no other man ever felt, in keeping hidden the Divine Life, which grew more and more conscious within him.

That He increased in wisdom, as He grew in stature, is saying that His mental development followed the common laws of mankind, and His human nature acquired knowledge exactly as others do; yet He had another kind of spiritual development, peculiar to Himself, and such as no other man or prophet ever had. It was the operation of His Divine nature on His human nature, which enabled Him to acquire knowledge easily; and through that influence, as He grew in stature, He grew in favor, both with God and man.

The favor with God, was from His submission to the condition

appointed Him, and obedience to His laws in it: His patient, willing, waiting, in obscurity, unknown to the world He had come to redeem; and His faithfulness in making such preparation as was in His power to prepare Himself for His public mission; as He afterwards said, "*I do always the things which please the Father.*" And His favor with man was, because He was always meek and lowly, thoughtful and tender of others feelings, and universally courteous, as we shall see in considering His after life.

If, then, in this interval, He attended no school, learned nothing from the Scribes and Pharisees, and belonged to no Jewish sect, and acquired nothing from the literature and philosophy of Greeks, Romans, Egyptians or Persians—for He never alludes to, or quotes them in His teaching, except from Æschylus once—there is no way to account for the wisdom and knowledge which He brought forth from that seclusion, when He burst with such splendor on the world—wiser than the wisest and oldest scholars of His day, and to use them as no prophet ever did; but from the fact, that they were superhumanly derived, from a superhuman source.

Doubtless He applied all the resources within His reach, and all the powers of His human mind to the task before Him; that He studied and mastered a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and the laws and wonders of the natural world, as His constant allusions to them show the most perfect knowledge of them; and the great book of human life and character, of which there was such diversities in the manifold nationalities of His native land; and, above all, He was taught by that WORD OF GOD, which St. John calls His Divine Nature, which was in Him.

Palestine was a Roman Province: a Roman Governor, and Roman soldiers, and adventurers were everywhere, and Latin must have been a common language; a dialect of Greek was also

common among the people, and most of the New Testament was written in it,—and without knowledge of these, Jesus would not have been prepared for His work; and though He probably habitually thought and spoke in His native Aramean dialect, He certainly conversed in Greek and Latin and Hebrew; because He quoted the exact words of the Greek Septuagint, as well as the Hebrew version; and He changed some of His Apostle's names from Syriac to Greek, and spake to Greeks in the Temple; and He also knew Latin, or He could not have talked with Roman soldiers, nor Pontius Pilate; and the common use and knowledge of these languages may be inferred from the inscription Pontius Pilate put over the crucified Saviour's head, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin,—that all who saw might know, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." And because He was so learned, He so easily baffled the plotting of enemies, who tried to entrap Him in His words; and it is also implied by the question the Jews asked in the Temple: "*How knoweth this man literature, having never learned.*"

It was, therefore, by His own personal application and self-culture, quickened by the light reflected from His Divine nature, that Jesus, using all the means within reach in His retirement, and at intervals of leisure from His daily work, that He acquired the knowledge requisite for His Human nature to begin His public ministry; and the evidence that he had that superhuman help is certain from His remark in the temple in boyhood,—“ I must be about My Father's business,” which was such a revelation.

Those hidden years showed by their results on Jesus, when He appeared as Christ, that they had been devoted not only to acquiring human knowledge, but also to practicing the Christian virtues He came to teach, and which made His after life so Divine, and His doctrines so far beyond what the world had ever before heard or imagined. And this silent life outshadowed to the world some most useful lessons; out of this darkness shines

the example of Jesus' humility, and patient waiting all these years, to prepare Himself to be recognized by the Father as His Beloved son, and to teach all mankind that worldly culture and helps are not essential to make human life successful ; that we may live unknown by men, and yet be known of God, and be trained by Him to do this life's work well in the humblest home, and most retired walks of life.

Jesus' holy boyhood and youth developed into a holy manhood away from the excitement and turmoil of the busy world, and daily occupied in manual labor, by meditation and prayer, and using His time as best He could at intervals for personal culture, He gave a perpetual example for the encouragement and consolation of the masses of mankind, who are doomed to common place and uneventful lives ; and showed them, that it is possible in humble homes to prepare for honor and usefulness, and favor with God and man ; surely this is no unimportant lesson to learn, and for the comfort of God's hidden saints, from the unwritten record of those hidden years.

Jesus' thorough knowledge of the Holy Scriptures was shown, in the frequency and appropriateness with which He quoted and applied them in the interpretation of the Prophecies, and how they related to Him. When he began His mission, He read in the Synagogue a prophecy of Himself, and said : "This day, is this fulfilled ;" when He was tempted of the devil, He repelled him by "It is written ;" and when the Jews sought to kill Him, because He disregarded the Sabbath, and claimed to be its Lord, and "called God His Father, making Himself equal with God," He said to them, "*Ye indeed search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of Me.*" This was said ironically ; it is the indicative, and not imperative, as in the English version.

And when we come to consider His doctrines, then will be seen the glorious proofs of His Divine origin, and perfect origi-

nality, which must have come from God alone, because they so transcend all that was ever before known or taught by man; and as He once told His disciples He had food that they knew not of, so also is it probable that he received wisdom and knowledge from God, in those years of preparation for His appearing as the Christ, which no man knoweth of, and which could have been communicated by no one but God. Jesus' enemies confessed He spake as man never spake, and to show their inconsistency in not believing in Him asked how He knew letters, having never learned, and thus became witness against themselves, showed that they were excuseless for rejecting Him. Then God caused that seeming void of eighteen years, so deep that no human mind has yet been able to fathom it; that men then, and to the world's end, might see, and know, and believe, that while He spake as man never spake, He also taught what none but God could have taught Him.





CHAPTER X.

JESUS ANNOUNCED AS THE CHRIST.

Centuries before Christ, two prophets announced that He would be preceded by a Forerunner, to prepare His way; and Malachi called him Elijah the prophet, because he would be a bold rebuker of sin like him, and call men to repent as a preparation for admission into Christ's kingdom.

Three Evangelists mention John's appearing, and two of them relate incidents that show he began his cry in the wilderness, about one year before Christ began His ministry. St. Luke says it was in the fifteenth year of Tiberius' reign, when Pilate was Governor of Judea; Herod tetrarch of Galilee, and Annas and Caiaphas were high-priests, that John preached saying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make straight a highway in the desert for our God."

God had mysteriously revealed the time and manner of Jesus' birth, and of His messenger's coming; but He provided that John's ministry should make such a record, as that the Jews then, and future generations, could not reasonably doubt, but that he was sent by Him to prepare Christ's way. The group of names mentioned, and the time in which they lived and their characters, all unite to establish the truth of the narrative.

After John had preached about a year, the new doctrines of confession, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins; and the people were aroused by his boldness in rebuking the Pharisees and Sadducees, calling them a generation of vipers, great multitudes began to follow him, and some supposed him to be Christ:

Then the Jews sent a delegation of Priests and Levites to ask him, "Who art thou?" and he said, he was neither Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet; and when they urged him to tell, "Who art thou?" he answered, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah." And they asked again, "Why baptisest thou, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet?" This shows that the Jews were expecting the Messiah, and that He would be a reformer, and rebuker of sin.

Then John announced Christ as about to appear, saying, "I baptize with water; but there standeth One among you, Whom ye know not; He coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; He will purge His floor, gather the wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire;" and it is a synopsis of the whole work Christ came to do.

No other way imaginable could better testify, that John was Christ's messenger, and that He had already come, "standing among you;" and his message was revolutionary, struck a death blow at Judaism, which had become a mere formalism; the spirit of the law was dead, and the people trusting to a ritual and ceremonial righteousness for salvation; and John's teaching ignored its covenant, sacrifice, and ceremonial; and he called them to the new covenant in baptism, that He who was coming would make to convey regeneration, and forgiveness of sins, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

This was the beginning of John's preparation for Christ, to transfer Judaism to Christianity; and the transition period lasted until Christ finished His ministry, and sent the Holy Ghost to inaugurate the New Dispensation. John's work was the link between the Law and the Gospel; he began the change from ceremonial and sacrifice, to the worship in spirit and truth that Christ instituted.

The people were in the darkness and shadow of death, deeply needing reformation; and the rulers were corrupt, and at no time before could the changes Christ came to make, have been accomplished without shocking the feelings, and causing violence of the people. Thus things looked, near the end of John's mission.

Then came Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, to be baptized of John; but John forbade Him, saying he had need to be baptized of Him. He had known Christ from childhood, and knew Him to be more righteous than himself; but he did not know that He was the Christ. And it looks as if John's work in awakening the people, was God's signal to Christ to begin His work: for He said, to John's refusal: "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."

Under the Law, obedience gave righteousness; and Christ showed that He had come, not to destroy, but fulfill the Law. His baptism was to sanction John's ministry, as well as manifest His obedience, and to begin His ministry.

Water was used in religious ceremonies, with other nations beside the Jews, as a symbol of purity and cleansing, and especially before anointing a king or high priest; and Christ was going to institute baptism, as the new covenant in His blood, for regenerating and cleansing men from Sin; and, as the sign and seal of discipleship to Him.

When Jesus was baptised, as He went up out of the water, the Heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God descended like

a dove, lighting upon Him. All the ancient pictures of His baptism represent Him as standing in the water, and John pouring it on Him; and the baptisms of the Law were made chiefly by sprinkling; and St. Paul speaks of Christ, as “the Mediator of the New Covenant, and the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.”

Jesus was praying as He came out of the water, when the Heavens were opened; and the first act after His consecration was prayer; and the coming of the Holy Spirit was the sign given John by God, to know the Mightier One, who would baptise with the Holy Ghost. And as it was the dove, which brought the sign to Noah, to signify that the temporal ruin man’s sin had wrought upon the earth was passing away, so now the dove was the herald of the greater blessing—Christ had come to bring, to repair the world’s moral ruin.

“And Lo!” a voice from Heaven, saying, “This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Thus, for the first time since creation, were the Three Divine Persons of the Godhead represented as on earth together, and concurring in the consecration of Christ’s human nature; for His earthly mission, and the acknowledgement of His Sonship by the Father, was the reward He received for His obedience. And His was the first Christian baptism, and the type of all future baptisms. Christ, by the Holy Spirit, consecrated water to forever convey spiritual regeneration, which it did not under the Law; and that was the meaning of His “baptizing with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” Thus began Christ’s regal, priestly and prophetic mission, as the Messiah, and Saviour of the world.

And John said, “I saw, and bear record that this is the Son of God,”—that is, as the Messiah; for he had no knowledge then that Christ was a person of the Godhead. That consecration was the first step towards preparing to set up the kingdom of David, and of God, that would never end; and probably there was no day

in Christ's life He looked forward too more anxiously than this, because He was to emerge from obscurity into the turmoil and excitement of the World; and knew all the trials and suffering He would endure, before He said, on the cross, "It is finished."

By His own act, Christ changed the covenant in the blood of man and animals, to the new and easier covenant by water and the Spirit, in His own blood; by which men could be made partakers of His righteousness, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven; and the descent of the Spirit, showed how the baptized are made spiritual children of God.

But John's witness was not finished; he had announced Jesus as the Son of God, and it remained for him to declare His mission in such a way that in all future times men might believe and know that He was the Christ.

The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the World;" yesterday He called Him the Son of God, but now he said, "He is the Lamb of God, slain to take away the sins of the World;" and thus at the opening of His ministry, John told how it would end; calling Christ the Lamb of God, was, to the Jewish mind, an explanation of all their sacrifices, and of the coming Saviour; and John and two of his disciples followed Christ, and He turned and said to them, "What seek ye?" He knew their motive, and their longing to know more respecting Him; and they answered, "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" He said, "come and see;" and they went and remained with Him that night. John knew Jesus well; and this new address of "Rabbi," showed that the wonders at the baptisms had caused new reverence for Him; Rabbi, being also the title of a learned man.

Andrew was one of John's disciples, who went with them to Christ; and when he saw his brother Peter, he said, "We have found the Messiah," and he brought him to Christ; and He said to him, "Thou shalt be called Peter, a rock;" thus, Jesus' next act

was calling two disciples, whom John's testimony had persuaded to believe in the Messiah; and John so far confirmed the prophecy, that, in the power and spirit of one like Elias, he had proved himself the forerunner.





CHAPTER XI.

CHRIST ON THE JORDAN, AND IN GALILEE.

All attempts to harmonize or chronologically arrange the events of Christ's public ministry have failed; God has not so revealed them; the Gospels are so fragmentary and disjunct, that it is impossible to reduce their records to any connected order; and the attempt here is approached with humility and diffidence, relying on the guidance of the Holy Spirit who inspired their writers.

As Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, so also did He immediately begin His mission, as the Christ, there. No mention is made of the way in which He spent the remainder of the day of His baptism; but, as He came out of the water praying, it is probable it was passed in retirement, meditation and prayer.

John's report concerning Him, increased the excitement created by the wonderful scene at His baptism; and the valley of the Jordan, which means the river of judgment, and the ford of Bethabara, or the house of passage, were fitting places for Christ to begin His ministry; who had come as a refiner's fire on the Jews, and to transfer the old kingdom of Israel to the kingdom of Heaven,—announced by John as at hand.

From the time of Abraham, the valley of the Jordan had been sacred-classic ground, and the scene of many remarkable

events. When the Israelites came out of Egypt, God judged them there; and turned them back to wander in the wilderness, until all the adults, except Caleb and Joshua, died; and when the children returned, as the priests' feet, who bore the Lord's Ark, touched the Jordan's water, it parted to let them pass on dry ground; and there the ravens fed Elijah, there its waters had opened for him and Elisha, and from there he went to Paradise in a chariot of fire; there, Naaman was cleansed of his leprosy; there, David slew the lion and the bear; and, now Christ passing through its waters, was preparing to destroy Satan's power, and open the way, across the Jordan of death for all believers, to the Promised Land of Heaven.

John's baptism of Jesus was the culminating act in his ministry, and his prophecy began to be fulfilled: "He must increase, but I must decrease;" and from that day the multitudes who had followed John, flocked to Christ; and as He was returning to Galilee, accompanied by His three disciples, they met Philip, a townsman, and he joined them; and Philip told Nathaniel they had "found Him whom Moses, the Law, and the Prophets foretold," "Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." This shows they knew nothing of His divine conception; but that they did know well the prophecies concerning Christ, and that He was Joseph's reputed Son.

Nathaniel asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" and Philip answered, "Come, and see." Jesus saw Nathaniel coming, and said: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in Whom is no guile." He gave him that first proof of His omniscience; and he asked, "Whence knowest Thou me?" And He said, "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." He perceived that Christ knew what his thoughts there had been, and he confessed: "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel;" meaning only in the Hebrew sense, the anointed seed of the woman.

Nathaniel was one of the few devout men who were waiting and expecting Christ, and he was chosen then as a disciple, and became an Apostle, whose name Christ changed to Bartholomew; because, like Simeon, he had not only "waited for the consolation in Israel," but had believed in His Messiahship as soon as he saw Him. Thus, by degrees, Jesus began to call the disciples He knew would be fittest to build His Kingdom on.

Christ told Nathaniel, for his confession of faith, that he should see greater things than he had seen at his baptism; namely, "the heavens opening and the Angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man;" which title He then first gave Himself, and which was verified at His ascension.

The next event recorded in Christ's life was, after He returned to Galilee, full of the Holy Ghost: then the Spirit led Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; it seems a strange event, and a strange time, when He was beginning His mission to destroy Satan's power, and begin His work of man's salvation.

It was the first trial of Christ's human nature; and after He had fasted forty days, that the devil assaulted Him. But it fulfilled the type of Moses, who fasted forty days when he went to the mount to receive the Law, and to learn how to establish the Tabernacle and Priesthood; so Christ now prepared Himself, to begin to teach the Gospel, and institute the Christian Church and ministry.

Satan first enticed Christ's human will to act against the Father's will; he knew the seed of the woman would bruise His head, he suspected Christ was that seed,—probably from the wonders that attended His baptism; but he expected to overcome Him as he did the first Adam, by tempting His appetite; and so he said, "If Thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread."

To have done so, would have interrupted the discipline

the Father imposed on His human nature, and opposed His will to the Father's will; and Christ said: "It is written, 'thou shalt not live by bread alone, but by every word that cometh from God.'" Satan was baffled, but again tempted Christ to cast Himself from a pinnacle of the Temple; quoting the Psalm that foretold the ministry of "Angels to hold Him up, that He should not dash His feet against a stone;" but He omitted the last part of the promise, that He would "tread the lion and dragon under His feet."

These trials of Christ's human nature failed; and Satan was doubtful if He were the Christ; to have done either act, would have revealed His divine nature, and draw upon it, to do Satan's will, instead of the Father's, in submitting to this trial of His obedience.

But the devil's effrontry was not quite confounded; and He made his last assault on Christ's ambition, offering Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, if He "would fall down and worship him." That looks as if he hoped by the blasphemous provocation, to impel Christ to reveal Himself; but He said, "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written: thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

Thus the Son of David smote His spiritual enemy with words from Holy Scripture, and sent him away confounded by one born of woman, for the first time in his long career of wickedness in tempting mankind. He had bruised the race's heel, and he now knew the bruiser of his head had come; for he felt again the power of the Son of God, by whom he was cast out Heaven, and knew He would finally cast him into Hell. When the devil left Christ, angels came and ministered unto Him.

An angel announced Jesus's conception; and angels attended His birth, and now they ministered to His human nature, for that only needed support; and they continually attended Him

through all His earthly life; were present at His resurrection, and escorted Him at His ascension to Heaven. And in Christ's temptation, there was a lesson for all His disciples; He was holy—yet tempted; we should never have known why we are tempted, but for Christ. His human nature made perfect by resistance, and our spiritual strength is increased, when we resist manfully as He did; and that He triumphed is our assurance that He is God, and can make us conquer also if we look to Him for help.

Some of the inhabitants of Heaven, Earth, and Hell, God and angels, the devil and men were present at Christ's temptation; and we see what a mystery our human life and nature are, and what helps and hopes we have for the final conquest of our spiritual enemy. Another lesson is: Christ did not seek the temptation—He was led by the Spirit; and our duty is to resist the first enticement to evil; and we learn, also, that doing our duties does not exempt us from temptation,—but when we are most earnest, we may expect the hardest trials; but the resistance increases our spiritual strength, and makes us like Christ.

Though Satan withdrew from Christ, it was only for a time; he never ceased occasional temptations—for He was tempted in all points, as we are, yet without sin—until he wrung from Him on the cross the anguish cry: "My God, My God, why hath Thou forsaken Me?"

Christ gave His disciples an example of fasting and obedience, by which His human nature was perfected; so must ours be made perfect in His way; and when we resist temptations, more than angels come to our help, even the Holy Spirit, He sent as His last, best gift to His Church after His ascension to Heaven.

There are no clues to help us trace Christ's course or doings immediately after His temptation, only that He returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and His fame spread abroad. But He next appears publicly at Cana of Gali-

ilee, where He wrought His first miracle of changing water to wine. He, and His mother, and disciples were present at a wedding; Joseph is not mentioned, and so probably was dead. Thus He honored matrimony by His presence, and turned water to wine to save the family the mortification of not having sufficient for the guests.

When His mother told Him of the want of wine, He said, "What have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come," which looks as if she expected He was about to plainly manifest His Messiahship to the world. No irreverence was implied in His words, only she must understand that,—though she was His mother as the Son of Man, she had nothing to do with His work as the Son of God; and thus, in the beginning of His ministry, He gave the warning against the idolatry He foresaw would be paid to her as the Mother of God's incarnate Son.

Mary surely saw something in Christ's manner, that assured her her wishes would be regarded; and she told the servants to do whatever He commanded. And they filled six jars with water, and drew wine from them, and bore it to the Governor of the feast; and He called the bride-groom, and asked why he had kept the good wine until the last?

The Mother's petition was the cause of Christ's first miracle, and it was a change of a law of nature by His will, for no word was spoken; and it anticipated the unbelief of future ages, when man would deny God's power to arrest, or control His own laws; and it was no more a miracle to change water to wine, than it was to make grapes to produce wine. It was a manifestation of His power over nature's laws, and "His disciples believed on Him."

There was also a spiritual lesson in the miracle; it was a symbol of the work He had come to do, by changing the water of the old covenant and kingdom into the sacraments of His

kingdom of God; and the water of John's baptism, into water consecrated by the Holy Ghost, to regenerate and sanctify men; to raise them out of the moral darkness in which the world grovelled, into the light and glory of the Gospel. If Christ had created wine in empty jars, it would have signified the regeneration of the Law; but putting in water, and changing that, signified the development of the Gospel out of the Law.

Moses' first miracle turned water to blood, but Christ's changed water to wine; the Law was a ministry of death; the Gospel brought life and immortality to light. And it was a symbol of what His Church would forever do; while His presence at a marriage feast, where was dancing and wine, showed that He had come to hallow times of joy and gladness, as well as of suffering and sorrow, and at last give men the wine of eternal life and glory in His kingdom in heaven.

Henceforth water was to be forever a symbol of regeneration and washing from sin, and wine the means of strengthening and refreshing the souls of believers; and the outward and visible signs of the sacraments He would institute, to take the place of the covenant and sacrifices of the mother Church.

From Cana, Christ went with His mother and disciples to Capernaum, and He taught and wrought miracles; but they remained there not many days. John began his cry in the wilderness, but Christ chose the greater publicity of teaching in the cities and villages of Galilee, where He must have been well known. Josephus says that Province was very populous, and peopled with many nationalities; bold and shrewd adventurers, the last people an impostor would seek, but which would soonest make His fame widely known.

In fulfilling the Law, Christ showed its spirituality,—which the Scribes and Pharisees had buried under their ceremonial,—restored the almost lost knowledge of true righteousness, and

made new revelations of man's future life and destiny. He did not come to revolutionize, but to regenerate society; and He knew that before His kingdom would be established, to elevate mankind socially and morally, He must suffer persecution until He found rest in death on the cross. He knew He was King of the Jews, and of a kingdom not of this world; but He would have no earthly glory, and came to do the Father's will, and not His own, that is,—human will.

The Evangelists agree that soon after this, Jesus went to Nazareth, where He grew up, and in the Synagogue declared His Messiahship by reading the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Himself saying, "this day is this prophecy fulfilled in your ears;" and the eyes of all the people were turned on Him, and they wondered at His gracious words. And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" They had known Him only as a carpenter, and now He claimed to be the Christ. That was not the way an imposter would have been likely to have done, where He was best known.

That question was the very first murmur of the doubt of Christ's Messiahship, and it was destined to begin a persecution that would increase until it ended in the cry at Jerusalem "to crucify Him." He knew the doubt; and that they wondered why He had done no miracle there, as they heard He had done elsewhere; and He said, "No prophet is accepted in his own country," and He showed them the miracle, that He knew their thoughts; and quoted Scripture to prove His words true: that in the famine in Israel there were many widows, but to none was Elisha sent, but to a gentile at Sarepta; and there were many lepers in Israel, but to none of them was he sent but to Naaman, the Syrian; thus telling them He was exercising His ministry as the Prophet did according to God's will. He had shown by His works elsewhere, that He is the Christ; but He had told them, by His words.

The people were filled with wrath at His sayings, and led Him to the brow of the city to cast Him down headlong; and the geology of the city now testifies to the truth and genuineness of the narrative,—for on its south-west side is a perpendicular precipice fifty feet high, where the mob intended to cast Him down; He had shown them in the Synagogue, that He knew their thoughts, and now He showed them the miracle of escaping from their violence. Passing through their midst He departed, they knew not where, nor how; and thus He did begin His ministry at Nazareth, as He had done at Cana and Capernaum, by miracles.

The want of faith in Christ, as the Son of God, in the Son of Man, “God with us,” caused His rejection in the beginning of His ministry, and His death at its end; and has caused His rejection ever since by many to our day, after all the new proofs of His divinity that have been accumulating for nineteen centuries.





CHAPTER XII. .

CHRIST'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

The persecution of Christ at Nazareth, led to His departure to other places and to new proofs of His Messiahship; soon after He taught in the synagogue, at Capernaum, and wrought a notable miracle. It was then a populous town, in the centre of Palestine, the resort of foreigners from the East and West; and where caravans from the East, and commerce brought by ships of the Mediterranean, passed through on the way to Damascus, and its market abounded with adventurers; so Christ's acts there would be conveyed to many Gentile nations, as well as severely scrutinized.

There, Christ cast an unclean spirit out of a man; and the act was notorious by the devil's calling Him Jesus of Nazareth, and asking: "Art thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God!" Before Christ spake a word, or the people knew His intention to cast the devil out, he was alarmed at His presence, and acknowledged His power to destroy them; which shows Satan had learned, at the temptation, that He was the seed of the woman.

His townsmen had rejected Him, but a devil had confessed Him to be the Holy One of God; this was Christ's first exercise of His power over a devil, for the benefit of another; but He

rebuked the spirit—told him to hold his peace, and come out of the man; and throwing him down before the people, “he came out, and hurt him not.” While the devil testified to Christ’s Divinity, He proved it by His power over the invisible kingdom of darkness, and fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy—“setting the captives free;” and also the prophecy of Zachariah—that when Christ came, “unclean spirits would pass out of the land;” not that they would no longer tempt, but could not injure the bodies of men.

That was a thrilling scene; and the people were amazed, and said among themselves: “What Word is this! for with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.” They saw and confessed that the act was supernatural; and “the fame went out into every place of the country round about.”

From Capernaum Christ went to Simon’s house at Bethsaida, and healed his wife’s mother of a fever suddenly, so that she rose and ministered to them. And these miracles spread His fame so, that “when the sun was setting, many sick with diverse diseases, and possessed of devils, came to Him, and He healed them.”

This incidental mention of sun-down, proves the reality of the scene, and the truth of the narrative: because, in a warm climate, the sick could not endure exposure to the sun. The casting out of demoniacs, was a different miracle from healing diseases; and revealed clearly the mystery of man’s subjection to their power, and was one of the evils Christ came to remedy.

No wonder then, that people flocked to Him, and believed Him the Christ; and that the devils confessed Him, as their destroyer. Again the scene changes, and a glimpse is given of His private life: “In the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went into a solitary place, and there prayed;” and that was no act of an impostor, or presumptuous, or vain glorious man.

He was about to extend His journey, and enlarge His work, and He sought help and direction from God; but here occurs one of those gaps, that neither Gospel helps us to bridge over. Simon and other disciples sought for Christ, and when they found Him, said, "All men seek for Thee." And He said unto them "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also. And He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils."

In what direction Christ and the disciples first went no account is given; but apparently it was to the Mount of Beatitudes north of Capernaum, when He preached that sermon which set forth the great principles of the Gospel, and was His primal act in transforming the Law to the Gospel, and the old Kingdom of God to His new Kingdom of Heaven.

Moses went into the Mount to receive the Law, from the same Lord who now proclaimed the Gospel; the Law was given amid thunderings and lightnings, and "made nothing perfect," and its despisers died without mercy; but the Gospel began with benedictions, revealed the spirituality of the Law, and a better righteousness through Christ, and a final salvation.

The multitude followed Christ, expecting He was come to establish a temporal kingdom, or seeking some personal benefit; but His first words were the key note to His Gospel, and the first step of departure from Judaism, as it was, to Christianity. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," the humble, and lowly in heart for they feel the need of a Saviour, and theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

He knew that the Jews expected earthly riches and glory, but He said His Kingdom would give only spiritual blessings; and swept away their hopes of a temporal kingdom, and showed Himself no agrarian, or revolutionist like Judas, who had caused political disturbance in Galilee;

The second beatitude was for mourners; not those weeping

the loss of friends or property, but the contrite, and broken hearted, they shall find comfort in His Kingdom, a heavenly consolation in doing its duties :

The third beatitude was for the meek, they shall inherit the earth ; this was a blow to Jewish pride, which looked for political power in Messiah's kingdom, and expected the whole world as their inheritance :

The fourth beatitude was for "those who hunger and thirst after righteousness," and not earthly power and distinction—they shall be filled ; because His Kingdom will give righteousness and peace to fill and quench such hunger and thirst :

The fifth beatitude was for the merciful, which rebuked the hard hearted rulers, who laid heavy burdens, and had a spirit of revenge towards their enemies ; and whom Christ knew would show no mercy to Him ; only such would obtain admission to His Kingdom, and receive mercy from God.

The sixth beatitude was for the pure in heart. The Jews were careful observers of their ritual, while their hearts were unclean and far from God ; and so they must repent, or they could not inherit His Kingdom, or even see God.

The seventh beatitude was for peace makers ; Christ knew how the Jews had been rebels and revolters against God, and the Roman rule, and how they would persecute and kill Him ; and they expected the Messiah would deliver them by violence from the Romans, but He taught them He had come to bring peace, by peaceable means.

The eighth benediction foretold how His Kingdom would be received, and what His disciples must expect for righteousness sake, but their reward will be great in Heaven ; and thus, for the first time, that future eternal reward was revealed to His disciples, as a motive to bear His cross, suffer persecution for His sake, all of which was very different from the proclamation they looked for from the Messiah.

Christ continued, that His disciples would be the salt of the earth, and salt is a symbol of purity; but if they were unfaithful, would be despised by men. They must let their light shine, to be seen of men, and so glorify God; and, for the first time, He called Him their father in Heaven.

And He enforced His doctrines, as no other prophet ever did, by His authoritative "*I say unto you*: I have not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it;" and unless His disciples' righteousness exceeded the Scribes and Pharisees, they could not enter the Kingdom of Heaven; proving Himself Messiah, by proclaiming mysteries of God, and foretelling who will be admitted or excluded from His kingdom.

And He revealed the spirit of the Law, forbidding anger, which leads to murder; lustful looks are adultery of the heart; and urged a new motive, not in the Law,—the danger of eternal punishment in Hell; saying it were better to pluck out an eye, or cut off a hand than to be cast into Hell: there must be no divorce but for adultery, and no marriage again for the guilty.

Oaths, resistance of evil, hatred of enemies and praying to be seen of men, are condemned; and alms-giving are urged as a means to make men like the Heavenly Father, who is good to the evil and unthankful. In these ways Christ repealed the Law, as interpreted by the Scribes, "It is said;" and rebuked the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, by His Divine authority, "I say unto you."

Christ also made a departure from the Hebrew Ritual, and the beginning of a Christian Liturgy in His prayer; the address "Our Father," and the doxology, were from old forms, and the first petition accorded with the first command of the Law; but that for the coming of the kingdom, was His kingdom, and to be continued for its prosperity until His second coming. The petition for God's will to be done, and for daily bread, and forgiveness, and deliverance from temptation, were in exact accord with the principles of His Gospel, and revealed the spiritual

nature of the old Ritual; while the principles of forgiveness had no parallel in any Hebrew prayer. And it was not until near the end of His mission, that He told the Apostles to ask and conclude prayers to the Father in His name; and no prayer so comprehensive as His, and adapted to all from childhood to old age, has since been compiled.

Each duty taught was a departure from the popular religion, and alms, and self-sacrifices were substituted for the old animal sacrifices; and purity of heart for the washing and anointings of the Law; and treasures were to be laid up in Heaven—because where they are, there the heart will be; and Christ's words respecting the singleness of the eye, evinced a knowledge of physiology, which modern science alone has explained.

The command “not to be anxious about temporal things, to trust in God, and to seek first His kingdom, and He will care for us,” were new doctrines, and His disciples have ever since found them true; the Law promised earthly blessings, and righteousness, for obedience; but the Gospel promises tribulation, Christ's righteousness, and eternal life, for entrance into and faithfulness in the coming kingdom of God: and this was His first mention of His kingdom, in this new aspect.

All rash judgments and deeds are warned against—because of the mysterious law of retribution, as well as false oaths and profanity; and all prayers will be answered—not always as we ask, but as God knows is best for us; and all must do as they would be done by,—and this, Christ said, “is the law and the prophets.”

And then, as the instruction draws to an end, He warns the people that the gate to the kingdom is straight, and the way to walk in it narrow, and few will find it; and they must beware of false prophets, for every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and cast into the fire; and calling Him

Lord, Lord, will not save them from condemnation in the judgment, unless they depart from evil.

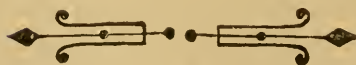
Thus the new Dispensation dawned with its doctrine of future rewards and punishments for the deeds done here; and that there is no salvation for any who build their hopes on any other ground than faith in Him as the Christ, and obedience to His Gospel and kingdom.

Jesus called this discourse, "sayings of Mine;" He delivered it by His authority as God, "I say unto you;" He announced Himself the future Judge of mankind, with power over heaven and hell; and laid down the duties men owe to God and their fellow-men, in every relation of life, as king or subject, master or servant, parent or child, buyer or seller, husband or wife, rich or poor, clergy or laity, with a wisdom God alone possesses; and now, after all the changes society has since passed through, His doctrines are infallible, and no one ever tried to conform to them without being convinced that they are of God.

Is it any wonder, then, that the people who heard the sermon, were astonished at His doctrines, so exalted in principle, and so vastly in advance of the practice of His age? It is impossible that any man, who was not holy himself, could have taught such doctrines, and given such a prayer, and with such consummate wisdom prepared the way to transfer Jewish ideas and service to Christian doctrines and worship.

And Christ's interpretation of the Law, viewed only in its relations to this life, as a system of ethics based on reason, and wise earthly policy, and to secure happiness, far surpass any thing ever propounded by prophets, philosophers, or legislators. Certainly nothing can be imagined better adapted to exalt mankind; no question of right or wrong that is too high or low to be adjusted by it; and it presented new motives for men to believe in, and obey Him as the Christ; gave an impulse to a

higher civilization, art, and science; and when it is considered that it was delivered by a young man, who had grown up, and labored as a carpenter at Nazareth, there is no other way to explain it, but that He was "very God of very God," incarnate in our human nature; for the doctrines were incarnate and exemplified in His life.





CHAPTER XIII.

CHRIST'S JOURNEY CONTINUED.

“When He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him” to the Lake Gennesaret, and so pressed upon Him to hear His words, that He went aboard a boat, and taught the people as they stood on the shore.

When His discourse ended, He told Peter to launch into the deep and let down his nets for fish; but he said they had toiled all night and taken nothing; but at His command he obeyed and enclosed a multitude of fishes, so that the net broke; and they called their partners, Andrew and John, in another boat, and they came and filled both boats. And when Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” And Jesus said to him, “Fear not; for from henceforth thou shalt catch men.” And when they brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

Some weeks before this, these men had met our Lord and professed their faith in Him, but returned to their employment until this time; as they appear afterwards, several times occasionally, to have done. With His followers, Jesus now returned to Capernaum; and as He was entering the city, there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying: “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou

cans't make me clean." And He put forth His hands and touched him, saying: "I WILL: be thou clean;" and immediately his leprosy was cleansed. He had been teaching in virtue of His own Divine power; but now, in virtue of His own Divine will, He told the man and the people, that He healed him of his loathsome disease; which the Jews held incurable but by God; and by the law, whoever touched a leaper was unclean. It was a type of sin; and by touching him, Christ showed that neither could defile Him; and He gave His words and deeds as proof of His Messiahship.

But He commanded the leper to tell no man, but go and show himself to the priests—and offer the gift for his restoration, which Moses commanded. This showed that He had not come to destroy the law; and it was also to make known to the priests, that Christ had come, who could heal sickness, and do what only God had power to do.

Scarcely had the leper departed, when a Centurion came to Christ, and besought Him to heal his servant, sick of the palsy; and the elders of the Jews approved his petition, saying, "He loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue," which looks as if he were a proselyte.

But the centurion said: "Lord, I am not worthy Thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." And Christ said He had not found so great faith in Israel, and told him to go his way; "and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee;" which was the first recorded expression of the infinite part faith was to exercise in His Kingdom.

And that Roman soldier was the first disciple Christ received from the Gentile world; but he appears not to have forsaken his profession, nor to have followed Christ—His personal mission being exclusively to God's covenant people. The centurion's faith compared Christ's dominion over the unseen world,

to his absolute military authority over his soldiers; and for that, his petition was granted.

Several months had now elapsed since Christ began His ministry, and He seems to have returned to Capernaum for a short time, and left because the Jews' Passover was at hand; and because His fame had so increased: multitudes were flocking to Him; and He went down to the lake of Gennesaret, and taught the people there. And a scribe came, and desired to become His disciple; but He said to him: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."

That was the second time Christ applied the title, "Son of Man," to Himself, which the Psalmist had given the Messiah a thousand years before, and which He often used in reference to His human nature; and thus He told the scribe, that He was the Christ. But he, evidently, was thinking of Him as a king, and expected some great honor as His disciple; but the poverty—not where to lay His head—shook his faith, and he turned away.

At the same time came another man, who had professed himself a disciple, and said unto Him, "Lord suffer me first to go and bury my father?" But He said to him: "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead." This was apparently an excuse for not accompanying Him; he, too, had probably heard the words of the scribe, and began to doubt the expediency of following Him any more. And Christ appears always to have tried the faith of all who offered to become His disciples, before He accepted them.

"And when He entered the boat, His disciples followed Him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the boat was covered with the waves; but He was asleep. And His disciples awoke Him, saying: Lord, save us; we perish."

The disciples who followed Him, believed Him to be the

Christ, and that He could control the laws of the natural world, because they had seen Him turn water into wine.

“And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then, He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”

This was the exercise of His power over two natural laws—the winds and the water; and He instantly interrupted their motions. And how perfectly natural, as the description of a real scene, by one who had witnessed it; and how natural the inquiry, from men who believed Christ was the Messianic Son of Man, but did not know or believe Him to be the incarnate Son of God?

These miracles were not contrary to the laws of nature, but was an exercise of Divine power in controlling them. God was the first cause of them, and certainly He could govern them; Christ wrought the miracle to show His disciples that He could control both winds and waves, and therefore was their Creator; and He did it, not to inspire their reverence or wonder, but to save them from drowning and allay their fears; though it was, also, incidental testimony to His Divine nature.

And when He was come to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two possessed of devils, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out saying, “What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God?”

What perfect consistency and reasonableness in this narrative; a few weeks at most before, the devils knew Jesus, and confessed that He was the Holy One of God; and now they express the same dread of Him, and call Him “Jesus,”—the name God gave His human nature, and say, “Thou Son of God;” and they use the same cry, showing knowledge of their impend-

ing doom. "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time;" they knew that God had appointed the time, when Christ would judge and condemn them to the torment of hell; and thus the devils testify to the truth of one of the great doctrines of a future judgment, and eternal punishment in hell, which Christ came to reveal. They saw in anticipation, the day when the devils who destroyed mankind would be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone," where "the smoke of their torment will ascend forever and ever."

The devils acknowledged Christ's power over them, and asked permission to enter a herd of swine; Christ gave it, and the swine rushed down a precipice and perished in the lake. This is the only miracle of our Lord, whereby an injury was done to a living creature; every other one was an act of benevolence, but this exercise of His power proved His words—that He would judge and condemn both devils and wicked men; for the law forbid Jews to keep swine to eat, or sell; they had violated the law, if they were owned by Jews; and so He acted as their judge, in punishing them with the loss of their property.

"And they who kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they besought Him to depart out of their coasts."

Thus the Jews and Gentiles of Gadera, had memorable witness that He who had come to lighten the Gentiles, had been among them; and so fulfilled another prophecy, that, when "the people should see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

The winds and waves had just obeyed Christ's voice, the devils had submitted to Him; but the unbelief and will of wicked men, He would not violently turn away. The time of the Passover was now at hand, and He went on His way to Jerusalem.



CHAPTER XIV.

THE FIRST PASSOVER

Four Passovers are mentioned in the Gospel, that Christ attended after He began His ministry; in His boyhood, He first declared in the Temple, that He must be about His Father's business; and on this first visit, He proclaimed it My Father's House; and on the fourth Passover He was crucified.

He had gone through Galilee, preaching the kingdom of God, and working miracles; His fame had spread every where in Palestine, many disciples believed in, and followed Him; and He went to Jerusalem, to the rulers of the Jews, and proclaimed Himself Lord of the Temple; and finding men there selling oxen, sheep, and doves, and exchangers of money: He made a scourge of small cords, drove them all out, and overthrew the tables, and said to the men, "make not My Father's House an house of merchandise."

The animals were for sacrifice, and the doves for offerings for the poor; and the money changers were brokers for the exchange of foreign coin—because current Jewish money could only be used as tribute for the Temple service, and to purchase animals for sacrifice.

These persons were in the outer court of the Gentiles, the least sacred part of the Temple; but the exercise of His authority

was an extraordinary scene; not that there was any use of the scourge, or violence, but it was Christ's Divine majesty, that awed such persons as would be likely to be employed in defiling God's House; and it foreshadowed another cleansing He had come to make, in abolishing animal sacrifice, and the Temple ceremonial, and instituting a new worship in spirit and in truth.

And the disciples saw in the fulfillment of the prophecy, "The zeal of Thine House hath eaten me up." Christ patiently submitted to the unbelief and persecution of the Jews, but His indignation was aroused by the defilement of the Temple. And a greater miracle can hardly be imagined, than the submission of such men to this stranger, apparently a peasant; but the act helps to confirm the authenticity and genuineness of the narrative, as well as show Christ as Lord of the Temple.

Nor did the scene pass unnoticed; it attracted the attention of the rulers of the Jews, as Christ intended it should; and they demanded of Him, "What sign showest Thou unto us, seeing Thou doest these things?" These rulers knew Christ was the great prophet, who had risen in Galilee, and they asked for a miracle to convince them of His Lordship of the Temple. But they did not believe in Him, and He would work no miracle to compel their belief.

But He answered them in a way, that foreshadowed what their unbelief would bring on the Temple, and that would help future generations to believe in Him, saying, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up again;" it foretold to them, what they would do to His human body, the Temple of the living God, and on which would be built the new kingdom, and also His resurrection from the dead on the third day; but they did not understand Him.

But said the Temple was forty-six years building, and "wilt thou raise it in three days?" When Christ rose from the dead, His disciples remembered His words, and believed the

prophecy which foretold His three days burial. The disciples did not understand Christ's words any more than the Jews; there was the same obscurity in His prophecies, as in the old prophets, until they were fulfilled. And this candor, in incidentally telling of their ignorance, proves their honesty; and the time of the temple's building proves that the event occurred at the time named, because it was nine years after that it was finished.

Christ arrived at Jerusalem some days before the Passover, and wrought several miracles, though not one is mentioned in the Gospel; because it is said, "many believed on Him when they saw the miracles He did." And the expulsion of the violaters of the Temple, without opposition from them, must have looked like a miracle to the beholders, and been subject of notoriety in Jerusalem; and one at least of the believers, was a rich and eminent man, Nicodemus, though he did not publicly profess it; and Christ made no special efforts to win the rulers to believe in Him, for He knew their minds, and needed not their help to make Him known, or His doctrines to prevail; and it was essential for the success and conclusion of His mission, that He should not positively declare His Messiahship to them, until He was ready to be crucified on His fourth attendance at the Passover.

It is probable Nicodemus was present at the cleansing of the Temple, and when the rulers asked a sign from Christ; and though he belonged to the bigoted sect of the Pharisees, he appears to have been a true Israelite expecting the Messiah, and ready to believe on sufficient testimony; and he went to Christ by night to learn more of His doctrines, and was gladly received and instructed.

The night visit shows, that the rulers doubted that Jesus was the Christ; and Nicodemus was afraid to confess his faith in Him, until he had learned more of His doctrines. And he said

to Christ, "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles Thou doest, except God be with Him." And Christ said, "Verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot see the kingdom of God;" the original, (*anōthen*) means "from above," a second birth from God, and without that birth man has no understanding of spiritual things; and Nicodemus showed it, asking, "How can a man be born again when he is old?"

Though the question was not reverently expressed, Christ's courtesy neither noticed nor resented it; but caused Him to repeat the truth in another way, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Both sayings were strange to the ruler, and the learned Pharisee, whose word was law to the people; and he must have been astonished at Christ's dictum, "I say unto you."

That was the first time Christ had come in direct personal instruction to a ruler of the Jews, and he was much older than Christ; yet He proved vastly his superior in spiritual knowledge, and of the analogy between the laws of man's physical and spiritual birth, and of the mysteries of the natural and spiritual worlds, which were known to Christ, or He could not have made the comparison, and which Nicodemus could no more understand than the cause of the blowing of the winds, as great a mystery now as it was then. Then Christ began that illustration of Divine truth by earthly analogies, that He so often used,—which were so in advance of the teachings of any preceding prophet or philosopher, and which is now a stronger proof of His Divine Nature than all His miracles; for it is knowledge yet known only to God.

When Nicodemus asked, "How can these things be?" Christ said, "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these

things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our testimony. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you Heavenly things." This too must have seemed strange language for this young peasant of Nazareth, as Jesus appeared to Nicodemus; and though it was designed to confirm his faith in Him as the Messiah, his unbelief made it only bewilder him.

Had Nicodemus known what we now know, as Christ knew it then, that the living fœtus in embryo floats in water, and is helped to the birth by it, into the kingdom of nature, he would have seen the beautiful analogy to which Christ referred; and why he could not see, nor enter the kingdom of God without the second spiritual birth from above, the new way opened to the kingdom of Heaven. And how wonderful it looks, when we read, that, "In the beginning" the earth was an embryo in water, and received its organization and birth by "the moving of the Spirit of God on the face of the water."

Jesus said to him, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again."

Jesus not only reproved this Doctor of the Law for his want of understanding of spiritual things, which comes from a pure heart and enlightened mind, and so was a type of the regeneration he had come to introduce, but He showed him how much more He knew of these mysteries than he did; and if he could not understand what he knew of earthly things, how could he expect to understand what He knew of Heavenly things,—thus intimating His Divine nature.

The doctrine of regeneration was not entirely a new thing, because the Prophets and ancient Philosophers had taught that a renewal of man's life and character were essential to his highest attainment; but they had no knowledge of a spiritual change,

but of one made by their own self-culture. The doctrine of metempsychosis was also a type of the struggle for a higher life. But Christ taught a new regeneration wrought only by the spirit of God, through the sacrament of Baptism, that admits the person into new spiritual relations with God, and was one of the great blessings He came to bring.

We owe to this interview of Nicodemus with Christ the only clear revelation of the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration in the Gospel, and that it is the sacrament for admission into His kingdom on earth and in Heaven.

Then our Lord propounded to Nicodemus another mystery, respecting Himself as the Christ, which is as inscrutable to this day, that, "No man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He who came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man who is in Heaven." Nicodemus knew that the title Son of Man belonged to Christ; and this was teaching him that infinite mystery, that the Son of God in Him came from Heaven; and in virtue of that union He was in Heaven, and derived His knowledge of the mysteries He taught him from Heaven. And to this mystery of Himself He also revealed another, which pointed onward to the connection of this union with the mystery of the regeneration of which He had spoken, through His own sacrifice.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Thus in the early part of His ministry, Christ foretold to this ruler, who three years later was to play an important part in it, how it would end. Because Nicodemus knew, that that serpent was a symbol of the Messiah, and of the salvation of man, and the destruction of Satan's power, which were to come through Him; and then He told him the reason for all this, "Because God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world, through Him, might be saved."

And thus Jesus delivered to Nicodemus an epitome of the whole Gospel; and of all that had been promised by the Prophets. And then He swept away the false expectation of the sect to which he belonged, that the Jews were to inherit His kingdom because of their descent from Abraham and David; but now, faith in Him and obedience to His Gospel was the only way to salvation; and without faith in Him, he and all others were condemned already; because they "believed not in the Name of the only begotten Son of God." And this is the condemnation, that Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil;" and Light is a title which Christ applied to Himself, as a symbol of the regeneration of mankind and society, which He had come to produce.

Words could hardly express to Nicodemus more directly, that He who talked with him is the Christ; or could have warned him more effectively of the danger of unbelief in rejecting Him; and no prophet or revelation from God, ever before shed such light on the mysteries of God, and the incarnation, and the kingdom of Heaven, and man's relation to God, and God's love for men, and the glorious destiny which Christ's coming was opening to them. It showed Nicodemus how the water of the Law was about to be changed into the wine of the Gospel. And it made an impression on him that future events show was never lost.

This discourse was intended not only for Nicodemus, and the rulers of the Jews, to whom as their representative He would naturally tell it, but also for all mankind to whom His Gospel should come; and as condemnation to all who refuse to believe in Him, because He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that We do know, and testify that We have seen; and ye

receive not Our testimony." The plural form of we, may have been according to a Hebrew usage to give emphasis to His words ; but it was also a declaration of a great mystery, that the Father was speaking with Him ; as He said at Bethany, in a speech made to the people there, six days before His crucifixion : "I have not spoken of Myself ; but the Father who sent Me. He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know His commandment is life everlasting : whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak." Is it any wonder, then, when we see how mysterious the works of God are, that there should be a similar mystery in His words ?





CHAPTER XV

CHRIST RETURNS TO JUDEA

After Christ's visit to Jerusalem, and the public and private testimony He gave the rulers of the Jews of His Messiahship, He and His disciples journeyed towards Capernaum; and at Aenon He tarried and taught, and there met His Messenger the Baptist, and their disciples, baptized there. There was no difference yet between Christ's and John's baptism; both were only professions of repentance of sins, of faith in Christ as at hand, and preparations to enter His kingdom when it did come; for Christian baptism, and regeneration, did not take place until the Holy Ghost came, and His kingdom was inaugurated:

And there, a question arose between John's disciples and the Jews about purifying; and his disciples told him that Christ was baptizing (though He baptized none but by His disciples) and all men were going to Him. They saw John's fame paling before the rising Sun of Righteousness, and were jealous for their master, and so complained.

John's first testimony to Christ was, that He is the Lamb of God, and Son of God; but now he called Him the Bridegroom, and Himself His Messenger; though He did not know that He was soon to go before him to martyrdom and Paradise. He declared Christ to be from above, and His doctrines from Heaven, and foretold His reception: "no man receiveth His tes-

timony," and that the wrath of God will abide on all rejectors of Him.

John wrought no miracles, preached no doctrines like Christ's, and never spake as He did by His, "I say unto you;" and he was not annoyed by His increasing popularity, for he was only the friend of the Bridegroom; and his joy was fulfilled in Him, because He was from above, and above all, and sent from God to speak God's words, and do His works; and then as his last testimony to Christ, he declared, "He must increase but I must decrease;" he said, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hands; he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Returning from Judea to Galilee, Christ and His disciples must needs pass through Samaria, which was near the heart of the Holy Land; but was classed by the Jews as a Gentile region, because of the foreigners introduced there by the king of Assyria, after the ten tribes were carried into captivity, and because of the schism of the Samaritans from the Jewish Church. They erected a rival Temple, B. C., 400, on Mt. Gerazim, and instituted a priesthood and worship of their own, without Divine authority; the Temple was destroyed B. C. 109, but the Samaritans maintained their rival worship, and were hated by the Jews. This helps to explain the incident which occurred on this visit of Christ. At every place, where we catch a glimpse of His life and acts, some new truth is revealed appropriate to the time and place, but of universal application.

About noon-day Jesus arrived at Sychar, in Samaria, the ancient Shechem, and rested on the curb of a well there dug by His great ancestor, according to the flesh, two thousand years before. The Patriarch Jacob bought the land from a man named Sychar, and called the place after him; it had many associations of interest for our Lord; for there, as the Lord God, He had wrestled

with Jacob, at the ford Jabbok; and here we learn, that his human nature felt weariness, hunger, and thirst as the Son of Man, like all the race, as prophecy foretold He would.

While resting there a woman of Samaria came to draw water, and Christ asked her to give Him a drink: "For His disciples had gone to the city to buy food." The woman asked Him, "How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest a drink of me, a Samaritan? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." Thus we learn that Jesus' person was of the Jewish type; and the reference to the animosity between the two peoples is one of those little incidents, which prove the truth of the narrative, for no writer of fiction would be likely to speak of two things so trivial, yet which are so conclusive, that the Gospels were written in the early part of the first century of the Christian era. Similar incidents run like a golden thread through the Gospels, and bind the whole into a remarkable unity, and prove that it is impossible they could have been written in any other age.

Jesus said to the woman, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who It is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink: thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."

She said unto Him, "Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep: from whence, then, hast Thou this living water? Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well; and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?" This Oriental figurative speech of living waters, and the picture of the well, and the mode of drawing water, are additional incidents confirming the truth of the narrative, and of the time and country where it was written.

Water is an element which has played a great part in our world's history, in the redemption of man, as well as his creation,—five-eighths of his body consisting of this element. And what a mystery water was, for eighteen centuries; men did not know how it was composed of subtle gases. God has made it a great

agent in the creation of both the natural and spiritual worlds; and Jesus' words show that He then alone of all mankind, and of all who were to live for centuries, understood their mysterious relations.

The well was a fitting place for the Great Teacher to speak words which would testify to the future generations, how much His knowledge was then in advance of all known by men; and to reveal to the Samaritan, that He was the great "Gift of God," the Living Water, the Fountain to be opened at Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness.

And as water helps to give life and birth to animal nature, and to sustain it afterwards, it is reasonable that it should play an important part in man's regeneration and salvation. The old world was destroyed by water, a new spiritual world was to be born from Christ, and he saved as Noah was—by water. And Jesus showed His power over it, by walking on its surface, and stilling its troubled waves, and turning it into wine; and by guiding His disciples to the room, prepared for the Pascal Supper, by a man bearing a pitcher of water; and lastly by shedding it from the surroundings of His own heart with His blood on the cross, as the finishing work of redemption, that the world might know and believe that He could give it power to regenerate and wash away sin.

So He said to the woman, if she had known who He is, the gift of God, His eternal Son, and had asked it from Him, He would have given her living water; that she would never have thirsted again, but be in her a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. "Christ treated her ignorance as He did Nicodemus', making it a means to enable her to understand higher spiritual truth; and this is another incident showing the unity of action in Christ, that His person and character were real; and the woman, seeing the deeper spiritual meaning of Christ's words, said to Him: "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

Jesus saw that this woman was longing for a better life than she had been leading, but that fear and shame prevented her from confessing it to a Jew and a stranger; and she represented her feelings in the subtle way, of asking for earthly water, to save the labor of coming to the well; our Lord with greater subtilty proceeded to make her reveal her mind:

And He said to her, "Go call thy husband, and come hither." This opened the way for the confession of her sins, and to find out what He meant by the living water. She answered, "I have no husband;" and Jesus said, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband; for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband; in that, thou saidest truly."

The woman saw that Jesus knew secrets of her life, which must have been unknown to Him as a stranger; and she said, "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and Ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." She showed that her mind was not in peace, and she wanted to know the right way of salvation.

And Christ told her, the hour had come for the new Dispensation, when neither Jerusalem nor Samaria would be sole places for God's worship; but it could be rendered everywhere, when offered "in spirit and in truth." This was His first announcement of the change He had come to make in the public worship of God. By His prophetic office He declared the time had come—for both Rituals and Priesthood to give place to better ones.

And He did not consider it bigoted or uncharitable to tell her, that the Samaritans had cut themselves off from God's covenant and salvation by their schism; though they held to part of the Bible, and had a priesthood and ritual similar to the Jews, and were expecting the Messiah. The Old Testament often speaks of the Spirit of God; but nowhere represents, as Christ here did, that in His essence "God is a Spirit." This was a new

revelation, and that God must be worshipped in spirit and truth ; not by a ceremonial worship, as she was accustomed to.

The woman said she “knew the Messiah cometh, who is called Christ, and that He will tell us all things ;” which shows that she had truer expectations of His mission, than even Nicodemus, and was better prepared for His coming. And He said unto her, “I who speak unto thee am He.” And so, to this poor sinful, but penitent woman, He first plainly declared Himself the Christ. And this is not the way an impostor would have been most likely to do ; but it was as prophecy foretold Christ, as making Himself of no reputation, as calling sinners to repentance, and revealing Himself to the lowly ; not the way a great prophet would have done, who sought his own, or any earthly glory ; because most of their messages were to kings or rulers of the Jews.

The disciples returned from the city, and were astonished to find Jesus talking with the woman : “yet no man said, what seekest Thou ? or why talkest Thou with her ?” They were astonished that He would have any conversation with a Samaritan ; yet, in their silence we see an expression of their reverence such as might be expected, if they believed Him the Christ.

Meanwhile the woman left her pail, and went to the city, and asked the people “to come and see a Man, who told me all things that ever I did ! Is not this the Christ ?” This Samaritan, living among a people noted for profligacy and schism, was the first volunteer missionary to announce to her countrymen that Christ had come, and invite them to see Him ; and her faith moved the whole city, so that a multitude went out to see Him.

In this interval the disciples asked Jesus to eat. “But He said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of ;” and the disciples asked one another, “Hath any man brought Him aught to eat ?” And He, knowing the inquiry, made it the occa-

sion to teach them more of the mysteries of His life and the work He was doing—aying, “My meat is to do the will of Him Who sent Me, and to finish His work.”

It looks as if our Lord let no moment, or occasion, pass without turning it to useful instruction for His disciples, or any person who came in His way, either seeking or needing instruction. He took their minds away from the meat which perisheth, to the higher spiritual food, and work He had come to do; and He was refreshed, because in their absence He had found one poor sinner who was ready to confess her sins, to believe in Him and be saved.

And turning to His disciples, He pointed them to the harvests in the neighboring fields beginning to ripen, and reminded them that the world was ripening for sowing spiritual seed; and by laboring with Him they would receive the wages, and gather “fruit unto life eternal—that both He who soweth and he who reapeth, may rejoice together. I sent you to reap that, whereon ye bestowed no labor; other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors.”

When the Samaritans came to Jesus, many believed on Him, for the saying of the woman; but many more believed, not because of her saying, but because “We have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ—the Saviour of the world.” No mention is made of any words spoken by Christ, yet He taught the Samaritans and they believed; and He saw that the harvest was ripening for Him to enlarge His work, and send more laborers—as this one woman had done so much. How far His disciples had already helped him, may be inferred from the fact—that as soon as Andrew believed in Him he called his brother Simon; and as soon as Philip believed he brought his brother Nathaniel to Jesus, and he believed; and as soon as the Samaritan woman believed, she called many fellow citizens who also believed; and they were sent to reap, as probably were

many others, on what they had bestowed no labor, but nevertheless would receive eternal wages and rewards for.

Very different was the way Christ's announcement of His Messiahship was received by these despised Samaritans, in comparison with its reception by His townsmen at Nazareth, and by the Rulers of the Jews; He knew beforehand of the welcome, and that also was food of which His disciples did not know. And there is nothing more remarkable in His journey, than this interview with the Samaritans; and that they so promptly confessed Him as "the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

How much we owe to the faith, confession, and conversation of this woman with our Lord, for an explanation of one of the profoundest mysteries of His religion! The water of life He gives is His own spiritual life, which regenerates and makes us Christ-men, or Christians; makes our bodies temples of the Holy Spirit, a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life; which gives the spirit of wisdom, and understanding, and spiritual strength, of the love and fear of God, and enables us to bring forth fruits of righteousness like Christ's; and His presence quickened in that woman, the desire for that living water.

In the Centurion, our Saviour discovered a seed of faith—destined to grow and fill the Gentile world; and now in the woman of Samaria was a like seed of faith, which prepared the way for His Kingdom there. Yet when Christ sent out His Apostles, He charged them not to go to Samaria, or the Gentiles; because the offer of His salvation must first be made to God's own covenant people.

Two characteristics appear in Christ's teaching, which distinguish Him from all the Prophets and Philosophers the world has had, and that increased as He drew near the end of His ministry; first, His authoritative "I say," as if His word were absolute, eternal, law; and second, the illustration of Heavenly truth by earthly analogies and things; and this knowledge is

even a higher proof of His Divine nature, and that He came from Heaven, and created the world, than all His miracles, —because they occur incidentally in His teaching, and were not presented as proofs of His Messiahship, but intended to confirm the faith of future generations.

Indeed the faith of the Samaritans was foretold by the prophet Amos: “so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria, in the corner of a bed.” And Jesus had now been announced, by John on the Jordon, as the Messiah; had declared Himself at Nazareth, had exercised His power in Jerusalem as Lord of the Temple, calling it My House and driving out its defilers; had been received as the Christ, the Saviour of the world by the schismatical Samaritans, and the first year of His ministry was drawing to a close; and He returned to Capernaum, to make that His home, because of His rejection and persecution by His townsmen at Nazareth.





CHAPTER XVI

THE SECOND YEAR'S MINISTRY.

Christ passed His first year's ministry teaching and working miracles in Galilee, Judea, and Samaria, to convince the rulers and the people of His Messiahship; and while the people believed in Him, the Scribes and Pharisees doubted;—so He began His second year manifesting His power in a greater degree.

After remaining two days at Sychar, Christ returned to Galilee, and took up His abode at Capernaum, where He was cordially received; because some of its citizens had been at Jerusalem at the Passover, and saw and heard what He did and said there. His fame had now spread through Palestine, and multitudes followed Him to listen to His teaching, and be cured of their diseases, and offered Him opportunities for the larger exercise of His love and mercy.

One day as He was teaching in the house, and Pharisees and Doctors of the Law were present from many towns in Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem, and the house was filled, and the doors crowded, the friends of a man with the palsy, unable to approach Christ, climbed to the roof of the house, opened its covering, and let the sick man down into His presence; and when He saw him, He said, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

This was the first recorded instance, where Christ had pronounced the forgiveness of sins; and certain Scribes reasoned with themselves saying, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" Christ showed them that He knew their thoughts, which none but God could know; and asked them which were easiest—to heal the sick or forgive sins? And that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, He said to the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house; and he immediately obeyed—and they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, "We never saw it in this fashion."

This exercise of His Divine power was before the Scribes and Pharisees, who had come to watch Him, and investigate His claim to be the Messiah; and He wrought the miracle to convince them, that He could forgive sins, as well as cast out devils, and heal diseases; saying, He did it as the Son of Man, which title they knew the Psalmist and Isaiah applied to the Messiah, and by which He afterwards said He would judge the world; and that He knew their thoughts, and could forgive sins was the highest proof He had yet given of His Messiahship.

There was a cluster of miracles, healing a paralytic, telling them their thoughts, forgiving a man's sins, and all confirmed by the acclamations glorifying God,—proving, at least, that the healing of the man was no deception; and it was testimony to the Scribes and Pharisees, that He had power to forgive sins.

And that is another picture of the place and customs of the time when Christ was on earth; the very house testifies to the truth of the scene; an humble cottage, covered with thatch of palm or straw,—as they are in peasant's houses to this day in Palestine, where the miracle was wrought. These incidental details, if they were not true would have made any imposture to be easily exposed.

Christ would work no miracle, except as a reward for faith; but in this case the faith was as strong in the men who bore the palsied man, as it was in him; and He appears to have healed him before many witnesses, to show that He could, and God would, forgive sins on the faith of others—which is the ground on which children are brought by parents and sponsors and entered into God's covenant, and obtain remission of original sin.

All things were now ready for our Lord to make His next grand move, that looked like preparation for His Messianic Kingdom. John had prepared the way for Him, and He had now prepared the way for a further development of His kingdom. And He returned to Cana, and there met a nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum, and who entreated Him to return and heal him, as he was at the point of death; his faith was tried by our Lord's command, "Go, thy son liveth;" and he departed for his home, and met his servants coming to tell him in the very words Jesus spake to him, "Thy son liveth," and he learned that the recovery was at the identical time Jesus said "he liveth;" and he and his household believed.

The nobleman's faith was at first weak, he supposed Christ's presence essential for the healing; but when his faith failed not, then the blessing followed. This was the second miracle He wrought after His return from Judea to Galilee; and the mentioning that it was at Cana, where he changed the water to wine, would not be likely to have been told, if the narrative were fiction or falsehood.

As Christ returned to Capernaum, He saw Matthew, the Publican, at the Receipt of Custom, and said to him, "Follow me;" and he arose and followed Him. The Publicans were generally extortioners, they paid large bribes to Roman officials for their offices, and compelled the people to repay them; and so were hated for their extortion, and friendship to the conquerors

of the country. But our Lord saw something in Matthew which showed that he was worthy to be His first Evangelist, and an Apostle, and He took him to train him for his office; and the world's experience since has proved the wisdom of Christ's judgment and choice,—for his Gospel, to this day, is one of the crown jewels in our world's literature.

That day Matthew, whose Hebrew name was Alpheus, the Son of Levi, invited Christ and His disciples to dine with him; and when the Scribes and Pharisees saw it, they asked His disciples how He could eat and drink with Publicans and sinners? When He heard it, He said, "the whole need not a physician, but the sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." This was another foreshadowing of the change He had come to make, by transferring the sacrificial ceremonial of Judaism, to the more merciful sacramental service of Christianity. And He showed the Scribes and Pharisees, that in going among sinners, He was doing the Messiah's work; and it rebuked their self-righteousness, as they knew the Scriptures declared there are none righteous. Thus their complaint caused Christ to make His gracious proclamation, that He came not to call the righteous, but sinners, and so all mankind; and repentance, not sacrifice, would save them.

Not long after this John's disciples came to Christ and asked, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but Thy disciples fast not?" This occasion He used also to declare His Messiahship, by the name of the Bridegroom, which their master had given to Jesus more than a year before.

God appointed fasting for man, when He created him, as a law of discipline to keep his will obedient, his mind pure, to promote his health and longevity; and John's disciples doubted if Christ was the Messiah, because He and His disciples neglected it. But He used their unbelief to give them another

proof, calling Himself the Bridegroom—a title applied to the Messiah by the Psalmist and Isaiah; and giving it as a reason why His disciples did not fast, because He the Christ was with them; but when He was taken away, thus foretelling the violent end, they would fast.

And how all this now confirms our faith; as it rebuked their pharisaical fasting, it proclaimed a larger liberty under the Gospel, when each one would show his love and obedience by voluntary fast—but all looking back to His “taken away.” And His allusion to a new patch and an old garment, and new wine in new bottles, meant that Judaism was too old to hold the Gospel truth; too weak not to burst and run to waste by the new spiritual doctrines He had come to reveal. In these ways He taught them the reformation He had come to make, and that the calling of sinners was the special work He was doing.

Christ called no Scribe, Pharisee, or noblemen to be His intimate friends or Apostles, to give eclat to His mission; in Him was the unworldliness of God who created the world, and He cared nothing for its fame or glory; had He courted and convinced the Rulers of His Messiahship, it would have thwarted the purpose for which He came; and earthly renown was nothing to Him, who had lived eternally in the glory of the Godhead in Heaven.

Soon after John's disciples had departed, there came a Ruler of the Jews, saying to Jesus, that his daughter was dead, and praying Him to come and lay His hands on her and “she shall live;” and as He went, a woman with an issue of blood twelve years came behind Him, and touched His garments, and He turned about and said, “Daughter be of good comfort thy faith hath made the whole, and she was immediately healed. But when He came to the Rulers house the child was dead, and the mourning minstrels were making lamentations. Jesus said she is not dead but asleep, not dead to Him; and “He took her by the hand and she arose.”

There were two successive miracles, one in a throng on the highway, for a woman's faith, without solicitation on her part; the touch of His garments healed her; the other was a direct exercise of His power over death; that caused the scorn of the people, at Christ's calling the death, a sleep, when He did it as the first proof of His power to raise all the dead. These miracles yet more increased His fame.

Soon after departing from Capernaum, Christ and the disciples made another circuit of Galilee; and as they journeyed two blind men followed crying, Son of David have mercy upon us;” and as He entered a house they came to Him, and He asked them, “Believe ye that I am able to do this? They answered yea, Lord.” They first professed their faith in Him, by calling Him by His Messianic title—Son of David; and they did not ask to have their sight restored, but only for mercy; and He touched their eyes, saying “according to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened.”

In all these instances Jesus taught, that all blessings from Him are proportioned to the faith of the seeker; and by these miracles He identified Himself with the prophecy of Isaiah, that “Christ would give sight to the eyes of the blind, and bear our sicknesses.” And, notorious as the last act was, He charged them to let no man know it.

It is difficult to understand why our Lord should have given such a charge, when His own works were making Him daily more known. It may have been, that He wanted them and the public to see that He felt no vain glory in His power, and He did not wish it blazoned as something He was proud of; but the charge was disregarded!

And they departed, and spread the report in all the country; and this, caused an influx of other sufferers; and as Jesus went on His journey, they brought to Him a dumb man, possessed with a devil, and He cast the devil out and restored the

man's speech. Thus, one miracle after another proved His power over all sin, and the works and power of the devil, and human maladies, and showed Him fulfilling the prophecy of healing all diseases, as things had never been seen before in Israel, in the times of the greatest Prophets; because their miracles were chiefly works of power, done only by calling on God to work them: His were works of benevolence, and done by His own will and power; commanding the devils by His "I say unto you." Samuel had raised a dead child to life, but he did it by praying to God to restore him; but Christ raised the child by His own will, taking her by the hand.

And we see how critically His miracles were scrutinized, and how impossible any deception could have been on Christ's part, when the Pharisees were ever about Him; and their enmity helps to confirm our faith in the genuineness of the miracles, because they admitted their power and reality, but said He cast out devils through the prince of the devils; they jealously watched our Lord, to detect any fault or deception, and unconsciously made themselves witnesses for Him. They had no faith in Christ, they could not deny the miracles, and they saw no way for accounting for His works of love and mercy like healing the sick, raising the dead, and forgiving sins, but attributing them to the power of the devil; that unbelief could so pervert their minds, shows what a perilous state it is for the human mind.

As Jesus and His disciples journeyed on towards Jerusalem we catch only here and there a glimpse of Him and His doings, in the Gospels; and no wonder, when St. John tells us of His continual teaching and working of miracles, of which they give us only snatches or dim outlines. One incident is His going through the corn fields—His disciples plucked and ate the grain on the Sabbath, and the ever alert spies complained to Him, of the violation of the day; and He referred to what David once

did in giving his followers shew-bread from the Tabernacle, which it was lawful only for the priests to eat; but He, as "the Son of Man, was Lord of the Sabbath." Thus He turned their complaint into a new proof of His Messiahship, and Divine Nature, because none but God is Lord of the Sabbath, or could annul it by His own act and will. The Pharisees followed and watched Him for three years to find some fault in Him which would confirm their unbelief, but found none; and yet, they continued unbelieving.





CHAPTER XVII.

THE SECOND PASSOVER.

Christ continued His journey towards Jerusalem, preaching the kingdom of God and working miracles; and His teaching respecting the kingdom henceforth, was prominent. He had said but little respecting it the first year, because it implied the uprooting of the old kingdom of God, and the growing of another on its soil; and He could not teach that without instant opposition, and provoking His crucifixion. And there was superhuman wisdom in the way He pursued His plan, until His purposes were accomplished.

The next sight of Christ, He was at Jerusalem, to attend the second Passover; and each one was an epoch in His public life. There was, by the sheep-market a Pool—called Bethesda; where the lame, and blind, and halt, and sick were laid to wait a miraculous moving of the water, at certain seasons, by an angel—when whoever first stepped in was healed of his infirmity.

Christ went there on the Sabbath, and saw a man who had been afflicted eighteen years, waiting the moving of the water, and He asked him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" And he answered, he had no one to put him in the pool; and Christ said to him, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk," and he was immediately restored.

That Pool of Bethesda was a type of the Fountain, prophecy foretold, would be opened at Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness by Christ; and He showed the people that an angel was not needed to stir the water, because He had come. Thus He went on giving new proofs of His Messiahship. That long afflicted man, selected as the object of Christ's mercy, was well known in Jerusalem; and was not restored for any faith in Christ, but to manifest His power to the Rulers; and to let the man know that his affliction was for some temporal sin, and designed to make him repent and amend; and he must beware and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto him.

The Jews rebuked the man for violating the Sabbath, by carrying his bed, and he said the man who healed me told me to do it; and they asked, "Who is He?" But the man did not know; afterwards he saw Christ in the Temple, and told the Jews, it was He; and they sought to kill Him. This accords with the bigotry of the Jews, in the beginning of the Christian era, and is another incidental proof of the truth of the narrative.

And Christ improved the occasion, to declare His Divine nature and authority over the Law; saying, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" they perceived His claim—that it made Him equal to God, and called it blasphemy, and sought again to kill Him.

But He knew their evil intentions, and delivered His great Discourse in the Temple, beginning with His authoritative, "Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son of Man (adopting the Messianic title for Himself) can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do;" and He said He could do anything the Father did, because He loved Him, and showed Him all that He doeth; and that they would see greater things than they had seen,—for the Father could raise the dead, and so could He; and the Father had committed all judgment to Him as the Son of Man, that all should honor Him, as they honor the Father;

and not to honor Him, was not to honor the Father who sent Him.

And then, as if to leave them excuseless for not believing in Him, after the words and deeds they had heard and seen, He said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him who sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

And again, "Verily, verily I say unto you; the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they who hear, shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given the Son to have life in Himself." And it looks as if human speech could hardly have declared more forcibly the fact, that He was and is the incarnate Son of God, possessed of the same power and glory as the Father.

But this Passover was a great occasion in our Lord's life; the Rulers of the Jews, and a vast multitude of people were present from all Jewry; and He poured forth other mysteries concerning Himself, well calculated to confirm all that He said respecting His Divine origin and Messiahship; for He continued the Father hath given Him power, as the Son of Man, to raise the dead, and judge and reward or punish all mankind for deeds done here; and the deeds He was doing was by the Father's will, and they testified that He is the Christ. And He appealed to John's witness, and to the Father's confession of Him at His baptism, as confirmation of His words and works that were from Him.

And as a final effort, to turn them from their unbelief and evil intentions towards Him, He said, "Ye have not His word abiding in you; for whom He hath sent, ye believe not." But they quoted Scripture against Christ, saying, "Art Thou not of Galilee? Search, and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no

prophet." But Christ reproached their unbelief, saying, "You indeed search the Scriptures to find eternal life in them, and they bear witness to Me; and you will not come to Me, that you may have that life. I receive not honor from men; but I know you, that you have not the love of God in you." And thus He proved that the Scriptures they quoted condemned them.

"I come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, who receive honor of one another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" I have no need to accuse you, for Moses, in whom you trust, condemns you: "for had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me; but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?"

These incidents at this Passover, at the pool, and in the Temple, were the fullest declaration of His Messiahship He had yet made to convince the Rulers of the Jews of His Divine nature, and to arouse them from their unbelief; and it was such an exercise of power and revelation of mysteries as none but God could make; and they were declarations of the truth of His Messiahship, grounded on His veracity as the Christ. Yet with Divine humility He confessed He could do nothing without the Father, and that He was not seeking His own glory, but their salvation who were plotting to kill Him.

And although for two years the Jews continued their intentions to murder Him, there was the continuous miracle, that they could not until He was ready to deliver Himself to their power when He did; while He went about increasing the wonders of His words and works all that time; and that was evidence to them, as it was intended to be to all future generations, of His Messiahship.

Nevertheless, none of Christ's doctrines were novelties; they were the development of truths dimly revealed to former gene-

rations, and imperfectly transmitted by tradition, which He brought to light, and enforced as new motives for men to believe in God, to love and obey Him. No similar discourse, and no such miracles were ever said and done by any other man; and all mankind knew of God and man's future eternal life, from all the prophets, was nothing in comparison with what Christ revealed.

What more Christ said and did at the Passover, how long He remained in Jerusalem, and in what direction He went—going from it—are not related; but He left behind Him truths enough to convince any honest mind, that He was the Christ of God, and Himself “very God of very God.”

Three Evangelists agree, that Christ's next public teaching was in the Synagogue at Capernaum, on the Sabbath, and there restoring a man's withered hand; and the ever watchful Pharisees were present, and were full of wrath, because He healed the man on the Sabbath; and He asked them, “Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath?” but they held their peace, and took counsel with the Herodians, whom they hated as friends of the Romans; but hoped to use to accuse Christ to the Romans as disloyal to them, and so have Him executed; but He withdrew to the Sea of Galilee, followed by multitudes from Galilee and Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond Jordan, and from Tyre and Sidon.

What a vivid picture that is of the scenes occurring nineteen centuries ago? What a confirmation of its truth it is, that these towns and places are named, whence the people came to Christ? How easily the narrative could have been proven false, if it were not true? Civil history says: Scribes, Pharisees, and Herodians then lived in Palestine, and held relations as there described. We almost see, through these by-gone centuries, Christ standing there before those hypocrites—calm and self-possessed—and they quailing before His divine majesty, silenced by His logic, but refusing to believe in Him, and powerless to find any fault in Him, or to kill Him.

That multitude that followed Christ to the sea, shows how His fame was increasing among the people, which further provoked the inimical Pharisees, who had followed in the throng; and when He restored a man possessed of a devil, and deaf, dumb and blind which amazed the people; and they asked: "Is not this the son of David?" And the angry Pharisees seemed to have answered the question, by saying, "that He wrought the miracle by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils." And this caused another of the remarkable discourses of Christ, which shows how superior His wisdom, knowledge and logic were to the shrewdest and most cultivated men of the age; and that, in whatever way they attacked Him, they were confused and silenced, and their opposition used to reveal some new mystery of His divine knowledge or power. And He told His enemies, if He worked by Satan's power, He was working against, and not for him; but if He cast out devils by the Spirit of God, the kingdom of God had come to them. And He warned them that the blasphemy they were speaking was against the Holy Ghost, for which there is no forgiveness here, nor in the life to come; and that at the judgment, they must give an account not only of their evil works, but also of their idle words.

That was a new revelation of the nature of sin, which none but God could know. They might insult Him with impunity, as the son of Man, but to attribute His power as the Son of God to Satan, was against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. It has been urged from this saying of Christ, that some sins not pardoned here, will be at the judgment; but it meant no such thing, but on the contrary,—that neither that sin, nor any other unrepented one, will then be forgiven.

And there was a pungency in the question to the Pharisees, "By whom do your sons cast out devils?" Because it referred to the exorcism of the Prophets, effected by power given them from God; and if none but God could cast them out, so also,

must it be by His power that He cast them out; and this was proof to them that He was the Son of God, since He was doing the works of God; and this was proof to them that He had come to destroy Satan's kingdom, because He could cast them out of men.

Christ's holy indignation was aroused by the blasphemy of the Pharisees, and He called them "a generation of vipers, because their hearts were evil;" and there is majesty and sublimity in this Gospel picture, in this carpenter of Nazareth,—as His enemies looked on Him—standing before the multitude unmoved by their wrath, telling them He knew their hearts, giving them proofs of His power over them, as well as the devils, and yet mercifully warning them against the awful condemnation to which their unbelief would bring them. And in these ways, He showed them how much more He knew of God, and future worlds, and man's destiny there than they did; and more, even, than they knew of their future life and destiny on earth.

The Pharisees saw this application of Christ's words to them, and though provoked were unabashed, by the way in which He had silenced them; and they returned to attack Him again, saying, "Master, we would see a sign from Thee." They did not call Him Lord, and the Master was probably intended as mockery, because their unbelief was unshaken. They had found Him too much for them in argument, and proposed to refute His claim, by testing His power to do a miracle at their request.

Jesus called them an evil and adulterous generation, and refused them any sign except that of the miracle of Jonah, three days and nights in the whale, and said it was a type or prophecy of the burial of the Son of Man in the earth for three days and nights. Thus, long before the event, did He foretell this particular of His own burial, as well as explain the type of Jonah. History confirms what He said of that generation; and He remained "Master" of the situation, as they called Him; for He

confounded them again by that mysterious type of Himself as He did before by His knowledge and logic; and yet, as if reluctant to leave them in their unbelief, He delivered another solemn warning to the whole nation.

Declaring to them, that, in the Judgment, the men of Ninevah and the Queen of the South will condemn them—because the one repented at the preaching of Jonah, and the other came from far to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and “behold a greater than Solomon is here.”

And He warned them of the peril of hardening their hearts, and falling into unbelief and sin, after being in God’s covenant; because they made themselves seven-fold more the children of the devil than they were before, and the last state of such a man is worse than the first; and so would it be with this wicked generation.

After this scene, Christ appears to have made another partial circuit of Galilee, and then returned to the Sea of Galilee, where the people thronged to hear and see Him, and where He did many mighty works, charging the persons healed not to make Him known, which, it is probable, besides the reasons already given for imposing silence, was also to show that the prophecy was fulfilled in Him, “neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets,”—that is, seeking His own praise, or desiring fame of man.

Being again in the house at Capernaum, He was told His mother and brethren desired to speak to Him. And He asked, “Who is My Mother? And who are My brethren? For whosoever shall do the will of My Father Who is in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother;” and so, He again warned His disciples against any undue reverence for her, which might lead to idolatry.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES CALLED.

The plan on which the Gospels were written gives internal evidence of supernatural wisdom ; for the narrative is more conclusive than it would have been if written chronologically, and as men commonly write: it presents characteristic incidents of the men, times and places, and of particular events; and details of passing scenes, apparently trivial and unimportant to that generation and country, which give a better idea and view of the epoch than any general description could ; and there is no other history of any age of the world, in which we can see into the hearts of men, their modes of thought, knowledge, and homes as in the Gospels.

Our Lord, having now made several journeys through the cities and villages teaching the people and working miracles, and having publicly declared Himself as the Christ to His townsmen in Nazareth, and to the Rulers of the Jews in the Temple, to the people of Samaria, to the Elders in the Synagogues, to the Scribes, Pharisees, and Herodians, and kindled up a light in the darkened Galilee, which shined throughout all the Holy Land, and created the general expectation that He was the Christ ; and having given the credentials to prove Himself the Messiah of prophecy, finding the field widening and whitening

for harvest, and requiring more laborers, next proceeded to exercise His Priestly and Regal power in choosing twelve Apostles, on whom He would lay the foundations of His kingdom, and its rulers.

“When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then said He unto His disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.”

He had given them a prayer a year before, to pray for His Kingdom to come; and now they must pray for laborers, as if the time of the coming of the kingdom was drawing near. And we see infinite wisdom in this plan of gradual development of the tremendous changes He had come to make, in changing the Levitical Priesthood to the Christian, the sacrifices of the Jewish Church to the Sacraments of the Christian, and the whole ceremonial worship, hallowed by the associations of fifteen centuries, to the Liturgical worship in spirit and truth He would institute for His kingdom, the Christian Church.

And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray; and continued all night in prayer to God.

After a day of wearisome labor in travelling, teaching, and working miracles by the Sea of Galilee, our Lord went to a mountain alone, probably the same one from which He delivered His introductory sermon, and spent the night in prayer. He was about to begin one of the most important acts of His ministry, which looked revolutionary, or tending to a Reformation of the old kingdom of God, its Rulers, and ceremonial; for St. Paul says: the Priesthood being changed, there was made of necessity a change of the Law; so He went to the heavenly Father for wisdom and guidance, because He came to do His will.

This picture of the Son of God, as the Son of Man, alone in the solitude of night in the mountain wilderness, to ask counsel of the Father, before He choose the Apostles who were to govern His kingdom, when His work was done, was evidently repeated to identify Himself as the Prophet, foretold by Moses; like unto himself, who went alone into Mt. Sinai, to receive the Law and authority from God, to consecrate the Levitical Priesthood, and to set up the tabernacle, and organize the old kingdom of God.

The next morning when He came down from the Mount, multitudes were assembled waiting for Him; and from them He chose twelve Apostles whom He empowered to teach and work miracles. They were only called to the Priesthood then, but had no power to ordain other persons; as the great High Priest, our Lord reserved this power in Himself, until after His resurrection. This was the transition epoch, when old things were passing away; but the number twelve was chosen, to fulfill the type of the twelve foundations of the kingdom of Israel, in the Heads of the twelve tribes. The whole kingdom of God was then in Christ, as a germ in a seed; and out of Him came its Priesthood, and Holy Catholic Church, which was finally organized after His ascension to Heaven, and through whose sacraments every member since received his spiritual life.

Before noticing the twelve men chosen by our Lord, let us look for a moment at the character of the Master, who had been long enough before the world for men to form an opinion of Him,—as it appeared then from what had already transpired, after He left Nazareth where His life was so long hidden.

His character appeared to be superhuman, for He had neither human ambition, pride, nor vanity; it looks now superhuman,—because no one since has lived such a life as a man, looking only at His human side; but it was only an example of perfect manhood, the likeness in which God created the first

Adam, but which he lost by Sin. There was perfect common sense in all He said and did, and perfect holiness of life; His enemies accused Him of being in league with the devil, not because He did any evil devil work, but because He cast devils out, and restrained their power to do evil; and His humility was as grand as His power; and He had such fertility and readiness of speech and perception, that He was Master of every occasion and situation into which He had come, or been driven by His enemies. He was so exalted above this world—that insults, injuries, or blasphemy, gave Him no personal pain or distress; these things passed over Him like soft clouds over a summer sky.

He had done nothing to excite the adulation or admiration of men; He had never made an error in judgment, nor spoken a word which was found untrue. Sincerity and infallibility characterized everything He said and did. His great spirit was stirred to its Divine depths, by the world's wickedness; but His innate refinement prevented Him from rebuking it with any more severity than its infinite need required. The soil of the old decayed world's civilization was prepared to receive His doctrines, and He gave a new movement to the thought of the age,—which was not only to raise society to a higher social, civil, and religious condition, but to open the way to a deeper knowledge of the Laws of Nature; and the momentum has increased, contrary to all the laws of physical forces, in proportion to the time and distance of its removal: until it has turned the darkness of Pagandom into the noon-tide light of Christendom, the water of time into the wine of eternity, and opened new views of God's love and mercy—which have been increasing and spreading among the nations from His day to our own.

“And when it was day, He called His disciples; and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named Apostles.” An Apostle is one sent by another; and St. Paul calls Christ “the Apostle and

High Priest of our profession," because He was sent from God; and He named the Apostles He chose after Himself; because they were, at His death, to succeed to His office as Apostle and High Priest, over His Kingdom or Church. He was now about to send them out, two by two, empowered with Priestly functions to teach, baptize, and work miracles; but they had no consecration by the laying on of His hands, or by the descent of the Holy Spirit on them, but by His own will He gave them power to act as co-laborers with Him.

The names of the Apostles are, "The first Simon, whom our Lord named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, whom our Lord called 'Sons of Thunder;' Philip, and Nathaniel whom Christ named Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the Publican; James, the son of Alphaeus; and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus; Simon the Canaanite; and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him.

These twelve Christ sent forth, after He had further instructed them, charging them not to go to Gentiles, or Samaritans, but to God's own people first; they were to make no provision for their journey, to trust to the hospitality of the people for their support, to teach, work miracles, and preach the kingdom of God is at hand. And He forewarned them how the Gospel would be received, and themselves persecuted; and that whoever received them would receive Him, and that neither they nor those who ministered to them would in any wise lose their reward.

At that time, when Christ came down from the mountain, there was a great multitude waiting for Him—from all Judea, and Jerusalem, and Tyre, and Sidon; and working many miracles, He also delivered to them another discourse, an epitome apparently of the Sermon on the Mount, charging them to labor and suffer, and endure for His sake, so should their reward be great in the Kingdom of Heaven. This was another new de-

parture from Judaism; the Law promised temporal rewards for obedience; but nothing was said of them as a motive for suffering for righteousness' sake; but the new glad tidings was eternal rewards in Heaven. And He pronounced a woe on the rich and worldly now, because hereafter they would weep and mourn; and "a woe, when all men shall speak well of you. For so did their fathers to the false prophets."

This was another of our Lord's characteristic discourses, enforced by His Divine "I SAY unto you," in which He repeated many of the doctrines and duties delivered in the Sermon on the Mount, a synopsis of the principles which must govern all the members of His kingdom in their relations to God and man; and which was really only an interpretation of the spirituality of the law, which the Scribes and Pharisees had over-ridden by their traditions, but which He now restored to their original place. For the principles of true religion are unchangeable, and have always been the same; because a thousand years before Christ the Brahmins of the East, who had preserved the principles of true religion by tradition, though they had lost the Priesthood and Ritual of the ancient Church, taught them, as they have continued to do in parts of the British Empire in the East, where they have neither Christianity nor science; that to be happy and please their God, men must be self-denying, moral, truthful, honest, obedient to, parents and to reverence the aged, and be faithful to marriage vows.

Jesus taught them to forgive enemies, bless those who cursed,—the hardest of duties, done perfectly only by God, which He daily manifested in His example,—and in this way showed His Messiahship; and they must expect forgiveness from God, exactly as they exercised it to their fellow men; and they must do good without hope of reward, but from God. And what inconsistency and hypocrisy there would have been in all this, were He not the Christ; and what proof it now is to the world

that He was the Christ. For where could this young man—a pupil of no Rabbi, a graduate of no school,—have acquired this superhuman knowledge and wisdom so much in advance of the learned Doctors of the Law? How did He know so much more of God than that generation, which human experience has ever since been confirming? While the whole drift of His teaching was directly opposed to the Spirit of the age, not only of His own nation, but to the general practice of the whole world. How could He, then, have been so much superior to all other men, who lived before or since,—unless He were, as He claimed to be, the Incarnate Son of God?

But little is known of the history of the twelve Apostles after our Lord's death; St. James, the Bishop of Jerusalem and author of the Epistle with his name, was our Lord's first martyred Apostle, slain by Herod at Jerusalem, A.D. 44; of James the Less, little is known; S. S. Peter, James and John were favorites of Christ, and were chosen to witness His transfiguration and agony in the garden, and were the first to whom He showed Himself after His resurrection; Matthew and John were the only Apostles who wrote an account of His ministry. S. S. Peter, James and Jude wrote Epistles; St. John wrote Revelation and was beloved by Christ, and St. Peter most loved Him; St. Bartholomew probably suffered death in India; and St. Peter at Babylon, for there is no evidence that he was ever in Rome: but on the contrary, St. Paul wrote an Epistle to the Church there, and speaks of two Apostles there, older in the ministry than himself (Rom. xvi: 7); and he would no more have written such an Epistle to the Roman Church had St. Peter been there, than a Bishop now would send a Pastoral to a neighboring Bishop's Diocese. The Gospel tells us something more of their characters, as will be seen further on; but they all did their work, and laid down their lives for the truth and defence of His Gospel; and the works and fields of labor of a majority of them are unknown;

while the unbelief of Thomas is one of the best proofs of our Lord's Divinity, as the betrayal of Judas is that He is the Christ; and each, in their way, died for the confirmation of the truth as it is in Jesus, and are yet witnesses to the world's ends for His ministry, Gospel, and Church; while Judas, the betrayer, is a self Martyr-witness for Christ's divinity.





CHAPTER XIX.

OUR LORD'S PARABLES.

Christ retained the Apostles with Him for a time after they were chosen, to further instruct them, before He sent them two by two, to preach the kingdom themselves; and as the appointment of the Apostles on whom the kingdom was to be founded, looked like an organic beginning, there was a necessity for concealment, and from that time He taught them chiefly in Parables; and what He said in public, which they did not understand He privately explained to them.

Parables were used long before Christ, to give instruction by the analogies of familiar natural objects; the Hebrew word is the same as proverb, which is commonly more obscure; the prophets spake parables, but not like Christ's,—because He revealed heavenly and spiritual truths by earthly analogies; things which God only knew, and so were evidences of His Divine nature.

And He used the whole visible world, with all its panorama of changing seasons, its governments, its agriculture, its mysteries of life and death, as well as its invisible forces, to teach spiritual truth; and to help His disciples comprehend the higher mysteries of the spiritual world, and the relations of God's two great kingdoms of nature and of grace. And His great underlying aim seems to have been, besides instructing them in their

duties, to convince them that He was God manifest in a human nature, to accomplish the Father's plans of love and mercy for His children of men. And in no instance did He ever transgress the order of nature, as it is now revealed to us by modern science, while using its mysteries to illustrate the higher spiritual truths. He showed that both kingdoms have common laws and mysteries, that evince a common origin; and are the product of a good, and loving, and Holy God, and are under His immediate control.

All Christ's parables are gems of Divine wisdom, and prophetic prescience of the coming power of His kingdom, expressed with wonderful beauty, and showing a perfect knowledge of the mysterious analogies of earthly and heavenly things.

We know not when, or where, most of them were spoken; but they relate chiefly to His kingdom, which most engrossed His mind, as His own mission was drawing to its end. And there is apparent in them, that which is observable in all His teachings, a gradually ascending scale of Divine truth; the first one, was of the Blind leading the Blind.

That was evidently a rebuke to the Pharisees, for their false teaching and misleading the people, and their watching to find some evil in Him, which proceeded from their corrupt hearts. He said a good man bringeth forth good treasures from a good heart,—so the people might compare His teaching and theirs, and judge which were best; and He reproved others for calling Him Lord, and yet not doing as He said; and assured them, that whoever obeyed His instruction would be like a man who built his house on a rock, which no inundation could sweep away. And the reference to building on the Rock, was on faith in Him; and a reference to the Prophecy by Isaiah, respecting the Messiah, "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation Stone, a tried stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste!"

It looks as if our Lord, leaving the Sea of Galilee, journeyed towards Nain, a town about twenty-five miles from Capernaum, followed by His disciples and a multitude of people; and as He was entering the town, a dead man, the son of a widow, was carried to burial; and He had compassion on the mother, told her not to weep, touched the bier, and said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise," and he sat up and began to speak; and He delivered him to his mother. And fear came on all, and they glorified God, and said a great prophet is risen, and God hath visited His people; and the fame of it spread through all Judea, and the neighboring region.

No one asked Christ to raise the dead man,—it was His compassion for the desolate mother, and to show the people His power over the kingdom of the dead; the first year of His ministry, He raised the Ruler's daughter, at the father's request, in the house before a few witnesses; this second year He raised the man publicly before a multitude, and manifested His power in an ascending scale.

From Nain Christ and the Apostles, followed by many people, went through the towns, villages, and country, preaching the glad tidings of the coming Kingdom of God, and healing all manner of sickness; thus identifying Himself with Isaiah's prophecy, as "the Lord who healeth all thy diseases," and hath "born our griefs and carried our sorrows." And the uppermost theme in His mind and teaching was the Kingdom, as the result of His incarnation and death, which was to carry on His work of salvation, and prepare the world for His second advent.

"When much people had gathered together, and came to Him out of every city," He spake the Parable of the sower, "whose seed fell on the way side, and was trodden down, and devoured by birds; and on the rock, and withered from lack of moisture: and among thorns, and was choked by them; and on the good ground, and produced an hundred fold."

The disciples asked what the Parable meant? and He said, "it was given them to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but not to all." Not because He did not wish all to believe and be saved, but because of their unbelief; and if they understood that He was about to transfer the old Kingdom of God to it, they would have arrested Him as a revolutionist, before His preparations were completed. Then He privately explained the Parable to the Apostles.

Seed is a type of God's Word, or grace; and the different places where it fell, of the way it would be received by men;—that in the good ground would be in His kingdom; the tares, or thorns, represented the mixed; visible aspect of the kingdom which will continue until the world's end. And He said, that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in the rulers of the Jews; and they had closed their eyes, and hardened their hearts, lest they should be converted, and He heal them. And turning to the Apostles, He said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see and hear the things which ye see and hear, and have not seen or heard them."

All this Christ foretold, that the Apostles might not be discouraged, when they saw how little apparent good their teaching produced; and also that future generations might believe in Him as the Christ, because He foretold what none but God could foreknow. And it is true to this day, that there have always been these four classes of hearers,—no more and no less; and the result of their hearing is now, exactly as He predicted in the Parable.

And in calling the Seed the Word of God, there was a subtle reference as to the way He was received; because it was one of His titles in the Old and New Testament. He was both the Sower, and the Seed; He sowed the mysteries of the kingdom of God, its foundations, and sacraments, which give His righteousness and eternal life,—“and whosoever hath, to him shall be

given ; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have ;” teaching the importance of cultivating the Divine grace after it is received. And so we see a perfect consistency in Christ’s life and teachings ; He came to give His life to call sinners to repent, and be saved.

The Parable of the Sower, was followed by that of the Kingdom of God, which He said would be like seed sown in the ground that grows day and night, that brings forth first a blade and then an ear, and the full grain ; yet, we know not how ;—but then comes the harvest. This was a prophecy, that as the seed of the Word grows in each human spirit, so would His Kingdom grow in the world.

And, again, Christ likened His Kingdom to a grain of mustard seed, the least of seeds which grow to a tree ; greater than all herbs, and the fowls lodge in its branches ; representing the way it would spread in the world, and the blessings the nations would find in its shelter. Looking over the realms of creation, with its millions of species of plants and animals, Jesus knew there was no more perfect type of His Kingdom than a seed. The Psalmist foretold Christ, as the vine from Egypt, whose roots would fill the land, and His branches cover the hills, and spread over the rivers and seas : the vine was a symbol of Christ and His Church, as it was also of the Jewish Church.

It has been said Christ erred in calling mustard the least of seeds, for there are many smaller ; but in the East there is an arboreus mustard, with a woody bole, greater than all herbs, its seed the smallest of the trees, and His words are literally true. And He made known that the same mysterious law of the physical cosmos, exists also in the spiritual world ; and so the seed prophetically prefigured the growth of His Kingdom from its insignificant beginning.

The growth of seed is often invisible for a time, but it springs and grows men know not how ; and this was a lesson for

the Apostles—not to be discouraged, though they saw no immediate growth of His Kingdom.

The Parable of the Good Seed predicted the visible aspect of the Church in all ages, and forewarned the Apostles, and all ministers, of the trials awaiting them in doing their duties; Christ is the Sower, the field is the world, the Seed His spiritual life; and the enemy sowing tares, is the devil, while careless or unfaithful ministers are asleep.

The darnel is a false wheat, with stalk and head, but no grain; yet both must grow until the harvest, because none but the Lord, the Judge, can discern between the true and false, except in the case of notorious evil lives. Then comes in the new doctrine, and new motive Christ revealed—of future rewards and punishments; the wicked to be bound in bundles to be burned, the righteous gathered into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Christ speaks of the devil as an actual personal being, having power to do evil, but only for a time. He represents him as the enemy of God as well as man; but He had come to destroy his power, and finally cast him into Hell. So Hell is a necessity of God's moral government, for the devil is God's adversary, and he always will be, and so must always be confined in that world of woe; and men will not be punished merely for sins done here, but because they made themselves evil, and will forever be adversaries of God, because He punished their evil; they will hate and sin, and so their punishment will be continued; because sin has a self-inflicting penalty, and there can be no repentance in Hell,—and if it were possible, there will be no mediator between God and the condemned.

The Parable of the Leaven hid in three measures of meal, foretold how the kingdom would leaven the world, without man's observation; and the number three, the Hebrew symbol of perfection, that it would help the good, the better, and the best,

in accomplishing its own mission,—leaven begins its expansive force immediately, so would His Kingdom.

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure, and the Pearl, and the Draw-Net, which belong to this cluster, and were delivered to the Apostles for their especial instruction, just before they were sent out to help Christ prepare for the kingdom, and bear upon the same point, and tell how the treasures hid in the earth, and the shells of the sea, representing the Divine grace of the Church, must be obtained by personal exertion; though it may be stumbled on while digging, yet both must be seeking for it; and when it is found, the finder gladly gives up the whole world for it. The Draw-Net looks forward to the final separation of the wheat and tares in the kingdom; the sea is the world; the net the Church. It will, like the field, have good and bad, so long as it remains in time; but when the angels drag it to the shores of eternity, then the final parting of the good and bad will be. The pearl of great price is the inward holiness of each member, and that represents the final aspect of the whole kingdom of God, when it is gathered for its harvest in the heavenly world; and so the future eternal destiny of Christ's Church is represented, and also that that grandest discovery of modern scientific investigation, of the unity of all the forces of the universe, has a like correlation in the spiritual cosmos.

Christ spake many Parables to the people, and when they were alone He explained them to the disciples. And thus they were gradually trained to understand greater mysteries when the kingdom came, and were prepared to teach them, while He fulfilled the prophecy, that He "would open His mouth in parables; and utter dark sayings of old;" and want of faith was a bandage over the Pharisees' minds, which made Christ's words darkness to them.



CHAPTER XX:

THE TWELVE APOSTLES SENT.

Some of the Apostles had been with Christ nearly two years, hearing His teaching, and seeing His miracles, and holy life, and being trained by His example to assist in His work, which had grown too great for Him alone. All of them were older than Christ, yet they looked to Him for counsel, and were obedient to His requests; and He did not send them out uneducated, or unprepared. He empowered them to teach, to cast out devils, and heal the sick; and said, "I send you as sheep among wolves, and men will deliver you to rulers, and governors, and scourge you;" but they must be harmless as doves, and they need fear nothing, for the Spirit of the Father would be with them and teach them. They must take neither clothing, food, nor money, but preach the kingdom of God; and where they were not well received, make no contest, but depart,—and shake the dust from their feet for a testimony against them. "And they went through the towns preaching the Gospel, and healing every where."

Surely it required faith and preparation for such men to begin such a mission, when they knew how their Lord was watched, and hated, by the Rulers of the nation. He charged them on entering a house to "salute it," which included all Christian courtesy. He aimed to have His disciples show the

power of His religion in their outward manners, as well as inward life; because true politeness has its foundation in the attributes of God, and a Christian gentleman would forever be the type of perfect manhood,—and Christ's example is the model; and politeness, a tender regard for the feelings of others, by personal sacrifice, is an eminent Christian virtue, and an outward sign of a Christ-like life; and is not Jesus Christ alone, in our world, such a Man,—living in that age of brutality and moral corruption,—as great a proof of His Divine Nature as any miracle He ever wrought?

And as they went they must freely give the grace and power received from Him, as it was freely given; and, finally, it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for those who refused to receive them.

They knew the conflict His preaching and doctrines had already caused in the world, and had been told by Christ, how it would set men and brethren against one another; but it was not from any evil in the religion, but because of its opposition to the evil and unbelief in men's hearts. But they need not fear those who could only kill the body, and their final reward would be to be confessed by Him, before His Father in Heaven; thus He was bringing life and immortality to light, ignoring the Legal Sacrifices and rewards and punishments, and transferring all to a future tribunal. This was the way they were prepared, and sent out to preach the coming of His kingdom; and to as many as received them, He promised that they should become Sons of God,—after the higher spiritual type of the Gospel. And He challenged men then, and to time's end, to try the doctrines, and they would learn that they are from God.

And that Discourse to the Apostles, foretold things none but God could know, and that have ever since been fulfilling. The sword Christ brought, His ministers have ever since been wielding, conquering peace for all believers, as well as sundering

family ties by the heresies and schisms which they cut off. All His teachings were adapted to the world He made, and also to its future history to be developed,—which no impostor could have foreseen and predicted, and none but the Son of God have known. The Apostles soon returned and reported their success to Him, and He took them apart privately to thank God in prayer for all they had accomplished.

After Christ had given the Apostles their charge and sent them out, He departed again to teach and preach in the cities. And here occurs another of those gaps in His earthly life, which the Evangelists furnish no clue to bridge over. But some interval of time had evidently elapsed since Herod Antipas had imprisoned John the Baptist; and he sent two of his disciples to our Lord, to ask whether He was the Messiah, or if they were to look for another?

It is not strange that John should doubt Christ's Messiahship, even after his testimony, and all the marvels which attended His baptism; because nearly two years had passed, and he saw no signs of a kingdom. And, as he was related to Christ in the flesh, and was conscious of his office as His messenger, he could not but expect, that, if He were the Messiah, He would deliver him.

But we now see, that this incident helped to bring out Christ's testimony concerning John more clearly, and so incidentally more plainly establishing His messiahship. In answer to the question of John's disciples, Christ told them to report to him what they saw,—the blind are restored, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised, the poor have the Gospel preached to them, "and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me."

Jesus said nothing personal of Himself, but showed them His works, and told them to report them to their master; but He thereby identified Himself as the Messiah of prophecy; and

warned John not to doubt it. And when they departed He delivered another of those speeches, which seem paradoxical, but plainly confirmed John as His Messenger, as the Messiah. John was a reed shaken by the wind, yet more than a Prophet; His Messenger, yet the least in the kingdom of Heaven was greater than he. John was greater than any prophet, because he was a miraculous child, announced by the Arch Angel Gabriel, as the Messenger of Christ, and His first adult martyr for righteousness' sake; yet he was less than the least in Christ's kingdom, because he died before it was organized, and before the Holy Ghost came, and so never received its spiritual regeneration in this world.

John's greatness was in his relations to God, and not to man. He wrought no miracle, wrote no Gospel, ordained no minister, organized no society, and left no disciples; after one year's labor he was imprisoned, and before his death his followers became Christ's disciples. But John began the great transition of Judaism to Christianity, and the new mode of salvation by faith in Christ, repentance of sins, and baptism, instead of the old covenant and sacrifices; and so he was a conspicuous person in working one of the greatest revolutions in our world's history. For Christ says, with John the kingdom of Heaven began to suffer violence, and the rending of the old kingdom began to prepare the way for the building of the new kingdom of God on its ruins.

It received its first death blow from John; the coming kingdom suffered violence by the assaults of the Scribes and Pharisees, while the violent, the Publicans and sinners began taking the old kingdom from its rulers, by a Divine force too powerful for them to resist. And this kind of testimony from Christ, this knowledge of the part the mission of John played in our world's history, is more conclusive as to His Own Divinity than His miracles; for it reveals what the rulers did not perceive, and what none but God knew.

Christ then, renewing His discourse to the people, rebuked

the whole generation, comparing it to children playing in the Market; because they accused John of having a devil, for his asceticism; and rejected Him, because of His socialism with the Publicans and sinners. And He reproached by name some of the cities, where He had wrought miracles, because they did not believe and repent; and foretold their penalty at the day of judgment. Many of His discourses pointed His hearers forward to that, as a chief motive to believe and obey Him.

And it required superhuman courage, for this young man to stand and rebuke a whole generation, before a multitude; and to tell them no matter how God sent prophets to teach them the way of salvation, they would not receive them; and that they would be cast into Hell, and their punishment be worse than the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is therefore certain, that some of the Jews believed in Hell, a place of punishment by fire, as their term Gehenna signified; or Christ's words would have had no significancy, and hence no warning to His hearers.

And then, as if deeply grieved at the foresight of the painful picture, and at the hard-heartedness of the people, He thanked the Father, "the Lord of Heaven and earth," that there were some meek and lowly who believed in Him, while He was hidden from the wise in their own eyes, and worldly prudent not to confess Him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue; and He repeated His testimony of Himself, as the Son of the Father, endued with all power in Heaven, Earth, and Hell, because He is the Son of Man; and He invited the weary and heavy laden to come to Him and find rest for their souls; and to learn of Him, "for I am meek and lowly in heart,"—an infinite contrast with the proud rulers of the day, and a perfect description of what the Gospel shows His whole life was. And finally He declared, what all Christians have since found true, "My yoke is easy, and its burden light;" very light in comparison with the devil's, which the men of the world are compelled to bear.

Not long after this, Herod beheaded John in prison, and his disciples buried his body, and went and told Christ. The Apostles also had returned from their late missionary journey, and reported to the Lord all they had taught and done; and He departed thence with His disciples, and a great multitude, into a wilderness near Bethsaida, and the sick were brought to Him, and He healed them; and there He wrought the great miracle of feeding five thousand, which tells how large the multitudes were who followed Him.

As it drew towards evening, the Apostles asked Him to send away the people, to the neighboring villages to buy themselves food. But He said, "Give ye them to eat;" and He asked Philip, "Whence they should buy bread for so many," to try him; but He knew what He would do.

The disciples answered, that "they had but five loaves and two fishes;" and He commanded them to be brought, and made the multitude sit down, and He blessed and brake the bread and fishes, and gave them to the disciples to distribute; and when all had eaten He ordered the fragments to be gathered, and they took up twelve baskets full,—apparently each Apostle collecting a basket.

This miracle was wrought for a double purpose; first to show His compassion for the famishing, and second as a lesson for the Apostles; because, St. John says, this occurred near the time of the Passover, as if it had some relation to that Festival. Which was, perhaps, to show that its sacrificial bread and wine prefigured those elements, which He was to make sacramental for His Kingdom; and to convey His righteousness and eternal life, as the benefits of His own sacrifice, as the true Pascal Lamb of God.

Christ did not distribute the food, nor gather the fragments, both miracles took place in the Apostles hands,—thereby He foreshadowed the channels through which He would trans-

mit His power, in His kingdom. And the remainder, after all had eaten, showed that the salvation through them would be more than enough for the whole world; and it was forever to be a memorial of His Divine power, and mystical, life-giving Presence in these elements.

The Incarnation of the Son of God is an infinite mystery; yet it is of the same kind as His spiritual Presence now in the elements of the blessed sacrament,—to give spiritual life; and now, as then, the miracle is wrought by Him, in His ministers' hands. And the supernatural quantity is explained, in that both the quantity of bread and its distributors have increased,—until now, day and night, all over the globe, these elements are being given to the living and the dying, and both are increasing; while modern science has furnished means to understand and believe the mystery. Because the Sun, millions of miles distant, sustains all life on the earth, and makes plants, flowers, and fruits grow; and this is one kind of proof that Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, can infuse His life and righteousness into matter, and make it give spiritual strength and life to men.

The transmission of heat and life on sunbeams, explains how Christ can transmit His life and grace from Heaven to bread and wine here; and yet, after consecration, they remain bread and wine,—a new spiritual element being added to them, while they are unchanged.

Besides this, age, that destroys all human things, has increased the distributors and receivers. Alexander and Cæsar inspired their armies with valor by their presence; but when they died their armies dispersed, and they were forgotten but in History; but Christ was crucified, and His disciples persecuted for centuries. But He has an army of three hundred millions who believe in Him, and worship Him, and would lay down their lives for Him; and ever since multitudes have loved Him, have lisped His prayer from childhood, have shown His righteousness

in their lives, and its power in death, by partaking of the Blessed Sacrament as the last act of this life; and showing unfaltering trust in Him, for time and eternity. And this, after so many centuries and the changes of time; is more wonderful than the original miracle, by which He antetyped it. And no wonder the people, who saw the miracle, said: "This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world;" and that they wanted to take Him by force, and make Him a King; but He departed into a mountain, alone.

That evening the Apostles sailed over the Sea of Galilee towards Capernaum; at dark the wind blew, and the waves arose, and they saw Christ coming walking on the sea, and they were afraid; but He said to them, "It is I," and they received Him into the boat, and immediately they were at the land whither they went.

There was a double miracle, differing essentially from that when He stilled the winds and waves: then they obeyed Him as servants; but now He walked on the water as its Lord, and transported the boat by His will to the shore. Three Evangelists give particulars of that stormy night: St. Peter, attempting to walk to Christ, began to sink, and He held and saved him; when He entered the boat the wind ceased, and the disciples worshipped Him, saying, "of a truth Thou art the Son of God." And, "They were sore amazed, and considered not the miracle of the loaves and fishes; for their hearts were hardened." This is not the kind of record men would make who were attempting to foist a false Gospel, or were themselves deceived, or trying to deceive others.

In this worship of Christ, and confession: "Thou art the Son of God," there was only the reverence due Him as the Messiah,—it was a confession of faith in Him according to their Jewish ideas, because,—with their monotheism,—if He had told them plainly of His Divine nature, they would conceived of Him only as a second God.

Christ never taught the Apostles before His resurrection, that there is more than one person in the Godhead, but "I and My Father are ONE; and "he who hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." And His words conveyed to their minds only a superhuman origin, a miraculous conception, having a will in accord with God's will. He continually spake of the Father's love, and of His coming forth from the Father, but said but little of Himself, even as the Christ; and never in such a way as to declare Himself as the Son of God, in His relation as the second Person of the Holy Trinity, so that they could understand it.

But may not Christ have taught the Apostles privately concerning His Divinity, when He said, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of God?" The answer is, there is no evidence of it except as one of the mysteries of the kingdom of God; this is apparent in all the Parables, and this was to prepare them for the part they had to take in it. It was as essential that this revelation should be hidden from them, as it was from the Jews, —until after His resurrection,—for they were not able then to bear it.

The next day Christ and His disciples went to Capernaum, and the people came to Him from the country and villages, bringing all kinds of sick persons, and He healed them. There, also, He delivered another discourse; which shows how He taught and reasoned with the people, and answered their questions and murmurs,—by revealing greater truths and mysteries.

He begun with His Divine "Verily, verily, I say unto you," as if He were God, and there was no appeal from His dogma; and it bears internal evidence, that it was no imaginary speech, but a true report of things both probable and real. There is the same confident tone, the same superhuman knowledge revealed, in His discourses, which none but God could know, explaining things He could not have done, unless He had been in Heaven, and knew them as God; doctrines of Heaven, Hell and Paradise,

and man's future eternal life; and He promised—that coming to Him, and believing in Him, would assuage that immortal hungering and thirsting all the race have for something this life and world can never give. And millions have since found His words true: and have said,—like the Samaritans to their country—woman, now we believe, because we have seen Him ourselves, and know that He is the very Christ of God.

He told the multitude a secret of their hearts, which many knew was true—that they followed Him to see His miracles, and eat the bread; and warned them to seek the meat which gives eternal life, which He can give, because God the Father has sealed Him, as the Son of man, to give it. And when they asked what they shall do? He says, “Believe on Me, whom the Father hath sent. And when they ask, what sign He could give to show, as Moses did, when He gave the Israelites bread from Heaven? He renewed His dogmatic declaration, “Verily verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from Heaven, but My Father giveth you the true Bread.” Moses' bread was made from this world's elements; and not Moses, but God gave it to their fathers from the sky. “But My Father giveth you the true Bread from Heaven; for the Bread of God is He who cometh down from Heaven, and giveth His life for the world.” The life of the Son of God, in His human body, had come from Heaven, and made Him Heavenly bread; how He could give it to them they did not understand, until the night before His crucifixion, and the institution of the Blessed Sacrament.

This was the beginning of our Lord's revelation to His disciples, of the use of Bread and Wine in the old sacrifices; and especially in the Pascual Supper, which were types of His Body and Blood. And when the disciples said, “Lord, ever more give us of this bread:”

“Jesus said, I am the Bread of Life: he who cometh to Me shall never hunger: and He who believeth in Me shall never

thirst;" and "all that the Father giveth Me, shall come to Me; and he who cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." And in this, He was doing the Father's will; and it was the seed of the doctrine which He revealed at the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, which He founded on the Pascal Supper.

When the Jews murmured and asked among themselves, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" He showed them that He knew their thoughts; and said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood (as the Lamb of God,) ye have no life in you." And whoever did would receive eternal life, and He would raise him at the last day; because thereby He would dwell in them, and they in Him; and as He lived by the Father who sent Him, so they would live by him; and to this day all Christian experience proves that His words were true.

It was a declaration of one of the deepest mysteries of His incarnation, and our redemption; and impossible for His disciples to understand, until the coming of the Holy Ghost,—and some said, "It is a hard saying." Would men, writing to deceive or make out a good case for our Lord, record such damaging testimony as this? But if they believed He were the Christ, then they knew it could not injure His cause; and they wrote the simple truth just as it was, and as God inspired them to write. In this way He taught, that the Sacraments of the kingdom of God, were to convey infinitely greater blessings than the sacrifices of the old kingdom of God.

The murmurs also drew from Christ another revelation of Himself, as the Son of Man, that He would ascend to Heaven, from whence He came as the Son of God; and that the Holy Spirit quickens by His sacraments, and conveys the eternal life to men; and that His word is both spirit and life, because He is the WORD of God, and so able to give eternal life to all who believe in and obey Him.

And then He ended His discourse, showing them He not only knew what thoughts were in their minds; that some, there, did not believe in Him; that one of His Apostles would betray Him. So that He knew what Judas would think almost two years after, and saying that he had then a devil.

And when some disciples turned away from following Him, He asked the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" And Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life! We believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" And we now know that He was, from His omniscience then shown, from the fulfillment of His prophecies, and because none but God, who endures so much from the unbelief and wickedness of sinners, would have suffered Judas' presence as an Apostle for nearly two years more.





CHAPTER XXI.

THE DELEGATION FROM JERUSALEM.

The report of Christ's increasing popularity, that He healed many diseases, and virtue went out of Him, to those who touched His garments and made them whole, was public rumor at Jerusalem; and the rulers sent the Scribes and Pharisees to examine into the truth of the reports, and they unconsciously made testimony to prove Him the Messiah. The number of our Lord's miracles must have been enormous, on account of the prevalence of disease from the immorality of the mixed population of Galilee. But these spies, instead of examining into Christ's miracles, and the truth of His doctrines, or if He violated God's laws, questioned Him about violating their traditions,—why He and His disciples washed not their hands before eating? Is such a question probable, if there were a possibility that His miracles were not real?

Although the accusation was trivial, yet it is important to confirm the truth of the Gospel; since Josephus and others of that age, confirm the existence of these parties in the Jewish Church, and that they exalted their traditions above God's law. With that Divine readiness, and logical force, with which Christ ever met His adversaries, He answered their question with another, "Why do ye transgress God's commandments?" This was a challenge for them to compare His life with their own.

One of our Lord's greatest revelations of Himself was His holiness; His perfect manhood; His ideal of human perfection, in all He said and did. And He proved Himself master of every

situation, where His enemies assaulted Him, and vastly superior to the shrewdest and most learned men of the age. He quoted one of their traditions, and saves Himself the discourtesy of calling them hypocrites—as they knew they were—by repeating Isaiah's prophecy concerning their ancestors, which made them see themselves their inheritors; He never used harsh words, unless it were with the desire to bring sinners to repentance.

He declared that their traditions dishonored the Heavenly Father, and their own parents: they destroyed the spirituality of the Law, and made all righteousness come from ceremonial obedience. But His interpretation of it showed, that its grand aim was to make a pure heart, and a holy life.

The disciples knew the Pharisees were offended at Christ's reception and discourse, and told Him; and He replied by warning the people against their teaching, and that they were blind leaders of the blind; and so was subtly preparing the way for transferring their authority and teaching to His Apostles, and leading the people to a higher standard of morality, and to the new worship of His kingdom, in spirit and in truth.

St. Peter supposed the Lord's words were a Parable; and, annoyed by his dulness, He asked with unusual severity, and included all His disciples, "Are ye yet without understanding?" as if He were astonished that, after being so long with Him, they were yet so dull.

After the delegation went away, Christ and the Apostles went down to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and there met a Syrophœnician woman, who besought Him to have mercy on her, and heal her afflicted child. And He did so; but in a way which made the miracle one of the most impressive pictures in the Gospel, by revealing how faith and importunity move His Divine compassion.

His mission was only to God's covenant people, though His kingdom would be for all mankind; the first offer of salvation

must be to Israel. This woman was a Gentile, and she had no claim then to His personal work. But she professed her faith in Him, as the Christ, the Son of David, and prayed for mercy on herself and child; but He took no notice of her, and the disciples asked Him to send her away; and she might well have asked,—Is this the merciful Jesus of whom I have heard so much? and have gone away.

But she did not; but cried on until He said to her, He was sent only to the Jews; then she drew nearer and worshipped Him, saying, "Lord, help me." This was an expression of strong faith, under a hard trial; and it did not fail of its reward; although His next words might again have caused her to despair, they did not. Christ said to her "It is not meet to give children's bread to dogs;" with the quickness of maternal instinct, and ready mother wit, she replied, "The dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the Master's table." Then Jesus appeared in His true character: "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt;" and her daughter was healed. Here were three stages of faith, of trust, and of waiting on Christ; first crying at a distance, calling Him Lord; second, approaching and worshipping Him; third, persevering in humility until her prayer was answered. So she, and the Centurion, and Samaritan woman were pledges of the blessings promised in Christ for the Gentile world.

Our Lord returned with His disciples from the region of Tyre and Sidon into the wilderness near the sea of Galilee, and many came to Him, and He did many mighty miracles of healing and casting out devils; and the people glorified the God of Israel, for all they saw and heard from Him.

Here, again, after the people had been three days in the wilderness without food, Christ's compassion was moved, because He knew if they were sent home they would faint by the way; saying so to the disciples, they asked whence would they have so much bread, as to feed such a multitude in the wilderness?

So soon had they forgotten His Divine power, manifested only a few weeks before, in feeding five thousand in the wilderness; and it is not the act of imposters to record such damaging incidents of themselves.

Jesus asked, "How many loaves have ye?" and they said seven and a few little fishes." And He commanded the multitude to sit down, and He blessed the loaves and fishes, and the disciples gave them to four thousand men, besides women and children; and the disciples took up of the fragments seven baskets full. Christ prefaced this miracle, as He did the former one of feeding the people, with asking a blessing, and giving thanks; though by His Divine power He was about to multiply the food, an example to all His disciples; and at the conclusion of the feast, gathering the remnants of food He created, was another example of economy,—for always it requires the economy of God to supply the waste of man.

The beginning of the miracle was the simultaneous seating of such a multitude by Christ's command. And what masses followed Him, and how eager they were to see and hear Him, is seen by the fact that in this wilderness were four thousand men, besides women and children; and, judging from the way children now outnumber adults, when any exciting things occur, it is probable many more thousands of persons were fed that day.

Our Lord and His disciples departed from the wilderness, and crossed to the west side of the lake to Magdala, and there the watchful Pharisees again come to Him, tempting Him, and seeking a sign from Heaven. But He declared with His absolute "Verily I say, there shall no sign be given this generation:" meaning none especially to convince the askers, because He was daily working miracles and casting out devils; and every miracle was a sign from Heaven, to the meek and lowly who were ready to believe.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

There is no record of how Christ spent His time, nor where He was in the interval between His departure from Magdela, and His appearance at Jerusalem, at the Feast of Tabernacles. This festival, called also the Feast of Ingatherings, because it was celebrated in the time of the harvest, was a memorial of the Israelites' dwelling in the wilderness, and prefigured Christ's dwelling in a tabernacle of flesh. And it was originally celebrated with great pomp and ceremonial; and in Christ's time there was a solemn assembly in the Temple on the first day, and on the octave when it ended; and every pious Jew was required to attend; and caravans of pilgrims went to Jerusalem, trumpets were sounded in the Temple, the Law was read, and seventy animals were sacrificed for the seventy nations supposed to be on the earth.

Every event in Christ's life brings out something new in Him, or helps us to see His power over the laws of nature, or to look into the hearts, the minds, and homes, and habits of the people, and see what was going on as it is seen in no other generation before, or even since the invention of printing. There is no other epoch in the world's history, where such details are recorded, and where the distinction between truth and falsehood can be more easily discerned, than in the three years of Christ's public ministry. The men, the towns and cities, the manners and customs, and transpiring events are photographed and transmitted to us, because He who is the God of Truth describes them.

As the time of the Feast drew near, Christ's brethren desired Him to go to it; and here comes out the honest confession, —that though the people generally believed Him to be the Christ, His brethren did not. And we see what real men they were, for it was a worldly and selfish spirit which made them urge Christ to go; if He were the Messiah, why did He delay in asserting

His office? Why delay setting up His kingdom? Doubtless looking to office, or honors, they hoped for themselves. Yet their doubts help to confirm our faith in Him; for they fulfilled His words then, that "a Prophet is not without honor except in his own country," and "a man's foes shall be of His own household;" and they show how He knew the human heart, and how it ever would be, that "all the world's akin."

But Christ only said to His brethren, "My time is not yet come." There is no evidence of any effort on His part to convince His relatives of His Divine nature; He did not begin, like Mahomet, to proselyte His relations first to believe in Him,—but told them to go to the Feast. They went and He soon followed them; He knew the Pharisees expected Him, and that they were trying to injure His influence, by accusing Him of deceiving the people; and those who believed Him a good man, were afraid to publicly say so, from fear of the Rulers.

This shows how fully Christ's character and works were scrutinized by friends and foes; and the under-currents of love and hate were suppressed from natural causes; the rulers dared not express their enmity, because of His popularity with the people; and the people's enthusiasm was restrained at Jerusalem, from fear of the Rulers. This does not look like invention; but was inevitable, were the narrative true.

About the middle of the Feast, Christ appeared in the Temple and taught. What His first instruction was, is not related. There is no instance in which He delivered a discourse for oratorical display, or merely to show His superior knowledge; but, in His interpretations of the Law and the Prophets, it is ever apparent that He knew more of the spirit of the Law, and hidden meaning of the Prophets, than the Scribes and Pharisees; while in His deep humility He confessed, "The doctrines are not Mine but His who sent Me." And if they would do God's will, they

would know the doctrines were from Him, and whether He was seeking His own glory.

Then He asked, "Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you keepeth the Law. Why go ye about to kill Me?" This exposing of their intentions enraged the enemies, and they said, "Thou hast a devil; who goeth about to kill Thee?" And He answered, not resenting their calumny, "I have done one work, and ye all marvel;" and He told them that they violated the Law of Moses, by circumcising on the Sabbath; and why should they be angry because He made a man whole on that day, and saying, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." His defense was sanctioned by their own custom, and He transferred it to administering His new covenant of baptism on the Lord's day; and in this way, undiscernable by the Jews, He gradually prepared to change the old ceremonial and ritual of the Law, to the Liturgy of His Church.

Some one present asked if Christ were not the man the Rulers sought to kill, and said that He spake boldly and they said nothing to Him, "Do the Rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?" This confirms Christ's words, and shows that the people knew of the evil intention to kill Him. And they said, "We know whence this man is; but when Christ comes, no man will know."

Here we see into the heart of the Rulers and the people, and how public opinion was divided respecting Christ; this secret talk among the multitude He knew, and there in the Temple declared, "Ye both know Me, whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom ye know not." He spake of the true God, and said, "I know Him: for I am from Him: and He hath sent Me."

And human language could hardly more directly assert His Divine origin, mission, and authority; and to suppose that He, whose whole life was righteousness and truth, and whose proph-

ecies have been fulfilling through all the Christian centuries, would make such a declaration if not true, requires more faith than to believe in Him and His miracles. Then look at the result: He, a seemingly helpless young man, rebuking the Rulers in the Temple; and they seeking His life, and yet no man laid hands on Him; because His hour was not yet come. "And many people believed in Him, and asked, when Christ comes can He do more miracles than this Man hath done?"

In almost every attack of His enemies, Christ brings forth new contemporary proofs to be transmitted to future generations that He is the Christ. Then how natural, and in accord with the acts, the scene which followed in the Temple; He telling the Rulers, that shortly He would go to Him who sent Him, and they could not find Him. And they sent officers to arrest Him; and yet, awed by this helpless Man, they dared not touch Him; His enemies were continually worsted in all their interviews with Him. And He continued His discourse, and, for the first time, publicly announced in the Temple His approaching end, and His return to the Father who sent Him.

But, as they did not believe He came from God, neither did they understand His words; but supposed He would leave His own country, and go among the Gentiles. And He continued to teach in the Temple, until the octave, the last great day of the Feast; and as it was the time of the greatest solemnity, and when most people were present, Christ stood there grandly conspicuous; and with a loud voice cried, "If any thirst let Him come unto Me and drink; he that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." This is a similar mystery in Christ's words, to all that is seen in His works, and in all creation.

It was a call to all who were hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and for all who wanted that peace of God, which this world can neither give nor take away. He told them, as

He had told the woman of Samaria, that the living water, the fountain of eternal life, was in Him, and would be opened at Jerusalem; but the Apostles, even, did not perceive the full meaning of His discourse, until the Holy Spirit came to abide.

Some of the people were so impressed by Christ's words that they said, "Of a truth this is the prophet, others, that He is the Christ; but some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Doth not the Scripture say, Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of Bethlehem. And there was a division of the people, and some of them would have taken Him, but no man laid hands on Him."

Could anything be more reasonable or natural than this, were Christ the Messiah? How exactly it accords with the whole Gospel narrative. It is utterly impossible such a scene could have been imagined, were it not real. Only a generation before He was born in Bethlehem, a notorious event at the time—and yet the people had forgotten it, or were divided in opinion; and the officers of the Jews had been there several days watching to take Him, but dared not lay their hands on Him. He was Himself a perpetual miracle before the people, but the Rulers were too blind and hardened to see it. When the officers returned without Him, the Pharisees demanded, "Why have ye not brought Him?"

And how plainly we now see the wisdom of Christ in this whole scene in the Temple, and in these notorious incidents, making these notorious enemies and their agents sent to arrest Him unimpeachable witnesses for His Divine power and wisdom; they could not take Him, and they returned and said to the Rulers,

"NEVER MAN SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN!"

One substantial confirmation of the truth of these officers' words is,—that Christ's words had so overawed them, that this Man, with no friends among the Rulers; and, were He any other

than the Son of Man, would have been so helpless to resist their authority,—had not been brought by them, but remained there Lord of the Temple. They did not plead want of opportunity, nor fear of the multitude, as on a former occasion; but His discourse, His majesty, and holiness repelled them. They dared not touch Him, nor say, you are our prisoner; their report is a confession for His claim, that He is more than man, and so the Son of God; and they preferred to return and encounter the risk of the anger of the Rulers, and the loss of their office possibly, rather than incur the danger of laying their hands on Him.

The Rulers asked the officers, if “they also were deceived,” and had any of the Rulers or Pharisees believed on Him, saying, that the people were cursed because they knew not the Law; and exposing their own ignorance of it, and justifying Christ’s condemnation of them, because they did not understand their own prophecies concerning His birth in Bethlehem, and His home at Nazareth. And here the timid Nicodemus, who came to Jesus secretly at the time of His first Passover, in Jerusalem, appears again as one of His witnesses, more believing and bold, and demands justice and fair dealing in any proceedings against Him. This appearing of the same person, under different circumstances and yet with the same characteristics, is another peculiar proof of the authenticity and genuineness of the Gospel narratives.





CHAPTER XXII.

CHRIST'S RETURN FROM JERUSALEM.

No record appears of the way Christ went from Jerusalem: it is another abrupt break in the Gospel, like the geological faults in the earth's rocky foundations; but He journeyed towards Capernaum, teaching and working miracles. And near Bethsaida the Pharisees and Sadducees came and asked of Him a sign from Heaven, as a proof of His Messiahship; and they were as much puzzled by His answer, as they were on a former occasion by the sign of Jonah. He told them they judged of the weather by the aspect of the heavens; and they were hypocrites in asking a sign from Him, when He had wrought miracles enough to convince them of His Messiahship, and they were seeking a pretence for rejecting Him. And a recent proposal to try God, by testing prayer on the sick would now receive a similar answer,—because He promised no answer to prayer not offered in faith; probably they hoped His pride or ambition would be moved to prove His power, so that they might discover some legerdemain by which He exercised it. But He gave them no satisfaction, and departed.

In the evening the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they reminded Christ; and He warned them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which they supposed referred to their bread. But He made them understand, that it was to their seek-

ing visible signs to find out if He were the Christ, instead of receiving Him by faith. And He reprovèd their weak faith, by reminding them of the thousands fed in the wilderness, and they need fear no lack of bread while He was with them; and so He drew their minds from the doctrines of the Pharisees, to the spirit and truth which He was revealing.

Not long after, Christ appeared at Capernaum teaching and working miracles, but He remained there a short time; and is next reported in Northern Galilee, near Cæsarea Philippi, where a blind man was brought to Him to touch. The man expressed no faith, and asked no help; but He took him by the hand, led him aside, put spit on his eyes, and asked him if he saw? And he said, "Yes, I see men as trees walking;" and touching Him again his sight was restored.

That was an unusual act; and it was a lesson to the disciples that mercies may be obtained by the intercession of friends when the person has no faith, or is indifferent himself; and Christ's kindness in taking the man by the hand, and touching his eyes, made him feel that the compassionate Saviour had come and opened his eyes. There, the curtain drops; nothing is told of the impression on the man, or of any gratitude; so he is a type of the multitudes who daily receive God's mercies, and give Him no thanks. And Christ sent him home, and charged him to tell no one of his recovery; this command to silence, apparently, was a gentle rebuke for his unthankfulness.

How long Christ continued there, and of what He said and did, not much is related; but the second year of His ministry was near its end, and He spake often of the end of His earthly life, as if it weighed on His mind. And then He asked the disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

It was not curiosity that prompted the question, for He knew; but an introduction to another question to the Apostles, because when they said, some called Him Elijah, John the Bap-

tist, or one of the prophets, He asked, "But whom say ye that I am?" And Peter answered "The Christ, the Son of the living God." On a former occasion Peter, speaking for the Apostles, said, "We believe and are sure, that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" but now his faith had grown, no prefix of belief and surety, but "Thou art the Son of the living God." Yet he meant no more here, than on the former confession, respecting Christ's divinity; that He was the Son of God, not by creation like Adam, but of a higher type, the very life of God in Him.

And Christ said the Heavenly Father had revealed it to Him; and because of this strong faith, He said, thou art Peter, a rock in faith, and on this Rock, "Christ the Son of the living God," I will build my Church; both the Old and New Testament call Christ the Rock; and Isaiah says, "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion a foundation Stone, a precious corner stone;" the Rock that gave the Israelites water in the desert was a type of Christ, and as the Rock He led them through the wilderness. And to refer the Rock to Peter is a perversion of the prophecy, and of Christ's interpretation of it, and of the idea of the kingdom of God, built on Him as the Rock of Ages; for He underlies the kingdom, as granite underlies and upholds the kingdom of nature on our globe. And He is the rock against which unbelief and persecution have beaten two thousand years in vain; it is one of the couplings of the Old and New Testament, and one of the links of prophecy which prove Christ and God are one.

The Church was built on Christ; it rests on Him now; and St. Peter never either claimed or exercised authority over the other Apostles. St. James presided over the first Apostolic Council; St. Paul rebuked St. Peter at Antioch for double dealing with the Jews; and St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, where it is said St. Peter resided, but which history teaches he never saw.

A key, is a symbol of authority; and when Christ said He would give it to Peter, it was for the twelve Apostles—and whatsoever Ye shall bind, He will ratify—that there might be twelve lines of Apostolic succession, against which the Gates of Hell should not prevail; and the Acts of the Apostles prove that each one exercised the power in founding the Church, and ordaining its rulers.

Though Christ had been teaching that His kingdom was at hand, this was the first time He called it the Church,—which to the Jews signified the separation of God's people from the Gentile world. The new covenant for entrance to it was repentance and baptism, because of faith in Him; and their future obligation was to devote themselves to the new Christian worship, so they would be members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom. Thus they were being drawn away from the old ceremonial, and the expectations of temporal rewards and punishments; and calling the Church, the kingdom of God, and kingdom of Heaven, revealed new views of it, as relating to the kingdom of God in Heaven. Thus gradually was He letting in light, on the transfer going on from Judaism to Christianity.

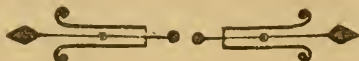
Christ had now trained His disciples into a belief in His Messiahship, and made them perceive that the old kingdom was being transformed into something new; of which, however, they had as yet no clear understanding. And He aimed to make the Apostles see and feel the great responsibilities that would devolve on them after His departure, of which He had plainly told them.

And at that time happened the only instance, in which an Apostle ever presumed to remonstrate with Christ—having told them that He was to suffer death at Jerusalem: Peter objected, and He said, “Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art an offence to Me,”—the only severe words He ever spake to an Apostle. Peter did not know that Christ must die before His kingdom

came, and he was expecting a share in the glory of His temporal kingdom; and surely he was not the Apostle most likely to be chosen, if any supremacy were to be given to an Apostle.

In concluding this characteristic discourse, our Lord renewed His warning to them of the hardships and perils they must endure for His sake, and that following Him was no easy road to travel; but demanded self-denial, self-restraint, and self-sacrifice,—even unto death if need be, for His kingdom, and their own and the world's salvation.

Then His thoughts seemed to glance forward to the world's end, when He said the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father, and judge the world. And thus while speaking of His death, He also told them of the glory which would come from it, and that some then present would not die until they had seen His kingdom come; and this was one grand step forward in revealing Himself to His disciples,—because what He had been calling the kingdom of Heaven, and the kingdom of God, He now calls His kingdom, as the Son of Man: that is, the kingdom some of them would live to see come on earth, would not have its completion until He comes to take possession of it in Person,—as the King of Glory. This was not understood by them, until after the Resurrection; but it was recorded for the consolation of all His suffering disciples, and to encourage them to bear His cross cheerfully to the end.





CHAPTER XXIII.

THE THIRD PASSOVER.

Departing from Northern Galilee, Christ went through the towns and villages teaching and working miracles, until near the end of His second year's ministry; when He was on His way to Jerusalem, to attend the third Passover, where He arrived several days before the Festival.

His abode was Bethany; and coming from the Mount of Olives, early in the morning, He went to the Temple; and there found the Scribes and Pharisees expecting Him, and intending to entrap Him in His words, or to discover the secret of His miracles; and in this interview He made new revelations of His power and wisdom.

While He was teaching, these enemies pressed into His presence, bringing a woman taken in adultery; and quoting Moses' authority that such sinners should be stoned, asked, "What sayest Thou?" tempting Him, to find some accusation against Him.

Their question was a compliment to His character; they evidently expected that His clemency was so great, as he had forgiven sinners unsolicited, He would forgive her,—and so approve of a violation of the Law, and the execution of its penalty; and for that they could arraign Him before the Sanhedrim. But here, as always where His enemies expected to entrap Him,

He proved too much for their intrigue and cunning, and turned their attacks to their own condemnation. He had before called the Scribes and Pharisees a generation of adulterers, and now He proved it. Apparently disregarding their question He stooped down and wrote in the dust at His feet; it is the only time He is said to have written, and no record remains of what He wrote. The questioners presuming He did not hear, or else being sure of entrapping Him, pressed their question; when He raised up and said, "He who is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And again He stooped down and wrote on the sand or dust. "And they who heard Him, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one,—beginning at the eldest, even unto the last."

How graphic this scene is. How probable from what Christ and history says of society then. How triumphant the peasant of Galilee appears in the Temple of the Lord, over its earthly Rulers. How perfectly Master of the situation. How now it assures us that He was the Lord of the Temple. And then look at what followed: "And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst; raising up and seeing none but the woman, He asked, Where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said: No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

Jesus spake as her God and Judge, "Neither do I condemn thee." What presumption and deception, were He not the Son of Man. How certain these incidents prove Him the Son of God, when He challenged these enemies to accuse Him of untruth, or any sin. These Pharisees had come to see the woman condemned, and to have Christ accused; but both were acquitted and the enemies convicted by their withdrawal. They were hard hearted, the woman was not only penitent, but believed in Christ for she called Him Lord; and she was forgiven on condition that she sinned no more. He proved Himself here,

as elsewhere, the friend of sinners who believed in Him and repented.

The following day Christ appeared in the Temple again, and taught in the Treasury, saying, "I am the Light of the World," and whoever followed Him shall not walk in darkness. This was an astonishing declaration of Himself as the Messiah, to the people and the Scribes and Pharisees, who knew from their sacred writings that Light is one of the Divine titles; and the Psalmist applied it to Christ, "The Lord is my Light, and my salvation;" and God is the Lord, who hath showed us Light.

And they knew also that Isaiah had foretold what they had seen and heard was going on in Galilee, if they would not admit it of Judea and Jerusalem, that the people who walked in darkness had seen a great Light."

But how much more astounding to us, that the Light, which then shined in darkness from the Sun of Righteousness, has been increasing in splendor, and spreading over the earth, until it has filled the whole horizon of time, and made Christendom the glory of our world.

But the judicially blind Pharisees could not see the Light, and complained that He bore record of Himself; and this again led Him to a clearer confession of His Divine origin, as if He were truly anxious to dispel their blindness and unbelief. They said His record was not true, because the Law required two witnesses to establish a fact in Court. His answer is a subtle argument for His Messiahship, and two-fold nature, both God and Man. And this was the drift of His whole discourse; "I bear record; I know whence I came, as the Son of God; I know whither I go, as the Son of Man. Here are the two witnesses required by the Law; but you are blind, and do not see whence I came nor whither I go,—because ye judge after the flesh, only what is seen and known by your animal nature.

And then to make them more excuseless for their unbelief,

He said His judgment is true, because it is coupled with the Father's; I bear witness of Myself, and the Father beareth witness of me. And they saw in His works God's witness to Him; they doubtless had heard of the Father's witness to Him, at His baptism; and they would hear it again in the Temple before another Passover.

The saying that His judgment is true, had more meaning than is apparent; it is so true that all who are judged by Him in this life, or the life to come, will admit His judgment to be both true and just; for it is not in the power of the human mind to conceive of any other way by which the millions of mankind would be judged so fairly, and so as to remove all possibility of injustice, all possibility of error in judgment, and to silence all fear or complaint on those who are judged, as this which the wisdom of God devised; in committing it to the Son of Man, who is the Son of God, and so brings all the wisdom of God, with all the experience of man, to make His judgment perfect.

This testimony of Christ did not remove their blindness, nor carnal views; and they returned His efforts to teach them with what was intended as a scoff, "Where is Thy Father?" And then looking at the hopelessness of their unbelief He said, "Ye neither know Me nor My Father:" thus reiterating His unity with the Father, and His Divine origin as the Christ, whom they would not know, He left them. And though they longed to lay hands on Him, they could not, which ought to have convinced them of the truth of His words; but it did not, for the next day, apparently, they had again come to the Temple, and find Him teaching. We know not how many days He taught in the Temple, but on the last great day there was a mighty contest between truth and error, as the one was in the Son of God, and the other in His blinded, chosen people; Christ reasoning to persuade them to believe in Him, and the Rulers parrying His arguments, and confirming their unbelief,—hardening their hearts as Pharaoh

and the Egyptians did, when Moses appeared and delivered their ancestors from bondage.

Christ told them, in a mysterious way, of His approaching death, resurrection, and ascension to Heaven; and that they would die in their sins, and could never follow Him there. And they pretended they did not understand His words, and asked sarcastically if He would kill Himself; but He renewed His testimony concerning Himself, that He is not of this world, and therefore is the Christ from God, as Isaiah foretold, Immanuel, God with us,—and if they do not believe “I am He,” they will die in their sins. Yet they persist in pretending to misunderstand Him, and ask again, “Who art Thou?”

His answer was: the same as I have declared to you all along from the beginning; and then assuming His office as Teacher from God, and Judge as the Son of Man, that is who I am; one from the true God, to deliver you from bondage to unbelief and sin, and tell you truth from God, things I heard in Heaven; yet they did not understand Him.

Then He foretold, that, when they had crucified Him, then they would understand that He is the Christ; that He had come from their Father, and had done His work,—showing them the unity of His will with the Father’s; and this made some believe in Him. And He said to those who believed, “If ye continue in My words, then are ye My disciples indeed;” doubtless said, because some who had followed Him a little while before, had turned away and left Him, because His doctrines respecting Himself were too hard for their faith; but if they continued steadfast the truth would make them free from bondage to the flesh and sin. The unbelieving Jews interrupted Him, saying, “We are Abraham’s seed, and never were in bondage to any man,” so would not be to His teachings. And He said their bondage was to the devil. And assuming His authority as a teacher come from God, He said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, whoever commits sin, is

the servant of sin;" and He made those enemies see that He knew their sins and malicious intentions towards Him, "because My words have no place in you;" and if they were Abraham's seed they would not seek to kill Him. But they renewed their claim as Abraham's posterity, and Christ accused them of hypocrisy, in doing so differently from what Abraham did when God tried his faith; otherwise they would love, and not hate Him, for telling them the truth, and trying to bring them to repentance and salvation.

And, with a rebuke, that must have aroused their deepest indignation, He declared that neither God nor Abraham, but the devil was their father; he was a liar and murderer from the beginning, and "his lusts ye will do;" and to make them forever witness for Him, and against themselves, He declared Himself the Holy One of God. Never before had Christ so plainly declared His Messiahship to His enemies, or spoken such severe rebukes to them; and because He saw His words only hardened their hearts, He asked, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Smarting as these enemies were under the stinging provocation of the accusation that they were children of the devil, the father of liars and murderers, He challenged them to return His accusation if they could! And certain it is, that, if there had been one stain on His whole life, one single error in His doctrines, one act of what men call dishonor, not to say sin, known by the hundreds of thousands, who had heard His teaching, or one act of fraud in His miracles, that these persons would have known it, and not let the provoking challenge pass without pointing it out. But instead of accusing Him of sin, their very rage was testimony for Him: "Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?" He denied this charge, said that He honored God, and they dishonored Him, and that He sought not His own glory; yet to remit not one iota of His claim, He resumed His Divine authority as a Teacher from God.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my sayings he shall never die;” that is, if he believes and obeys he will have that eternal life that the second death and Hell can never touch. To this His enemies replied, “Now we know Thou hast a devil,” because the saints are dead. “Art thou greater than our father Abraham?”

In answering this question, our Lord’s testimony of Himself reached its grand climax. He had tried in various ways to make them see and feel that He is the Son of God, and equal with the Father; and when all else had failed, He made that unmistakable claim, that no learned Jew could possibly misunderstand;—that He whom you claim as your God is My Father, that He was before Abraham, and he rejoiced to see His day; and with the awful solemnity of His “Verily, verily, I say unto you,” He applied to Himself the ineffable title of the one only living, eternal and true God, the “I AM;” and the enemies understood this, and they left us the testimony that they did understand it; and did not believe it, because they took up stones to cast at Him. And He gave them that new proof that His words were true, and He is God, because no stone hit Him, no injury was done Him; but passing through the throng, which had been hanging wrapt with His power and wisdom, He left the Temple and disappeared from Jerusalem.





CHAPTER XXIV

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

Leaving Jerusalem after the Passover, Christ and His disciples went towards Galilee, and entering a village they saw a blind man on the wayside, begging. He was born blind, and a well-known person in the vicinity; and Christ made an ointment of clay with spittle, and put it on His eyes, and told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam; and he went and washed, and came seeing; and it was on the Sabbath.

This caused the disciples to ask a question, showing the popular Jewish belief, and which none but God could answer, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that He was born blind?" He answered, neither; but that God's will might be done by Him in the miracle; and it opened the way for a further revelation of His Messiahship to His disciples, and Rulers of the Jews, and concerning His departure from this world. He said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world," which was a mystery of God and science that none but He then knew; for modern investigation has revealed the mystery of the triple elements the symbols of the Godhead in sunlight, and the fact that all animal and vegetable life are sustained by it—God's agent to give life here—and so a type of Christ, and His eternal life giving salvation. The Psalmist foretold that at Christ's coming,

men would "see the Light;" and St. John said, that Christ lighteth every man who cometh into the world; having brought life and immortality to light.

When the Pharisees heard of the miracle, they had the man brought to them; and they asked him, how he received his sight? He told them: and they said, "this Man is not of God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But some friends of Christ present, asked: "How can a man, who is a sinner, do such miracles?"

This shows that the friends and foes admitted that the miracle was wrought, and elicited the confession of some that Christ was immaculate; so the investigation brought out new testimony to His Messiahship, and the genuineness of the miracle.

Again the man was asked, what he thought of Christ? And he said "He is a Prophet." Then the enemies called the man's parents, and asked them if he were their son who was "born blind, and how then doth he now see?" And by their unbelief they elicited new testimony for Christ; the parents said, "We know he is our son, and was born blind; he is of age, ask him." They so answered, because they feared the Jews would cast them out of the Synagogue. Thus the two kingdoms were coming in conflict, and the strife of the sword Christ came to bring was unsheathed—never again to rest in its scabbard until He comes again; but then, as ever since, all opposition to Him, only adduced new proofs of His Divine nature.

The Pharisees told the man to "give God the praise"—this confessed the miracle genuine; and the reason given was, "We know that this man is a sinner." And thus they proved what Christ said of them, two days before in the temple,—that they were "lying children of the devil;" because He had then challenged them to accuse Him of sin, and they did not, because they could not. And it looks as if nothing but the wisdom of God could have so planned it, as to make this testimony of

Christ's enemies prove Him to be the Christ of God, whom they were rejecting.

The man annoyed by their impertinence and unbelief, sarcastically asked them, if they wanted to hear more about the miracle in order to become Christ's disciples.

And they reviled Him, and said they "were Moses disciples, and knew God spake to Moses; but as for this Man, we know not whence He is. And the man replied with the unanswerable argument, "We know God heareth not sinners; since the world began it was not heard that any man opened the eyes of one born blind! If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing."

They were mastered in logic, but they cast him out of the Synagogue; and he became the first one of the great army of Confessors for Christ, whose names have been cast out for believing in Him, from that day to this. Christ heard it, and sought the man, and asked him: "If he believed in the Son of God?" And he asked, "Who is He that I might believe in Him? And Christ confessed Himself to Him? and He said, "LORD, I believe; and he worshipped Him." And this was not that Oriental reverence, customary to be shown to Rulers and distinguished persons,—but the worship and adoration, which came from his faith and love, and gratitude for what Christ had done for Him.

A multitude were present, at this interview between Christ and the man, and some were the ubiquitous Pharisees, and Christ renewed His instruction to them. "For judgment am I come into this world, that they who see not might see; and they who see, might be made blind." It was a further revelation of Himself, that He had come from the Father in Heaven to do His work; and a warning to them of the penalty for their spiritual blindness, because seeing His miracles, they would not see Him, as the Christ.

They saw the application ; and, nettled by it, sought further controversey with Him, asking, "Are we blind also?" And He answered, "If ye were blind ye would have no sin; but now ye say, we see, therefore your sin remaineth." While it warned them for blinding their minds against Him, as their God and Saviour, it drew from Him words full of comfort and consolation for all who do not sin wilfully, for He will pardon them.

CHRIST'S TRANSFIGURATION.

Leaving the place where the blind man was restored, our Lord went on His way to Capernaum; and as they went He told the disciples, that they would live to see His kingdom come with power. They did not understand His words, until the Holy Ghost came.

St. Luke says, it was about eight days after that discourse, that the Transfiguration occurred; and that Christ led the three Apostles chosen to witness it into a mountain to pray. Neither one of the Apostles mention the locality except St. Peter, and he calls it the Holy Mount; and if it were Mount Tabor, He would have ample time to make the journey, and to teach and work miracles by the way.

The three Apostles, chosen as witnesses of this supernatural scene, were our Lord's favorites, who were present when He first raised the dead child, and manifested His power over death; they were now called to behold His glory as the Son of God, recognized by the Father's voice from Heaven; as they afterwards witnessed His agony, as the Son of Man in Gethsemane.

We do not know if His human nature expected this manifestation. He had recently told the Apostles of His approaching death; and the retirement for prayer may have been because of His mental depression. The scene is represented as sudden and unexpected; and it looks as if the Father came to acknowledge

Him, and reveal to His humanity the glory awaiting Him, to comfort and support Him.

While He prayed, suddenly the appearance of His countenance changed, He was overshadowed with the brightness, and His garments glistened with the glory of the Father's presence; and two Saints from Paradise were visible, in their spiritual bodies. Moses had been dead fifteen centuries; the other called Elias, His messenger, the Baptist, but two years; and they talked with Christ, respecting His departure from this world, and told His humanity of the glory death brings the Saints, to comfort Him under the painful prospects of death, from which His holy human nature must have shrank, with an intenser feeling than we do. For although He knew His body would never see corruption, He knew also that death is the penalty for sin; and His death was to bear the burden of the world's sin.

The two Saints present were to be His forerunners to Paradise. The Baptist had performed that office on earth; and he was called Elijah, because, like the Tishbite, he shunned men, lived in the wilderness, wore the rough garment of a prophet, and was the reprover of a king; and he had gone before Christ in martyrdom to Paradise, and now he was honored by God, with this permission to return to this world, and witness this triumphal scene in his Lord's life, and to announce His coming before long to preach to the Saints in Paradise. (1 Peter, iii: 19.)

The Apostles, wearied with their long journey, fell asleep, while Christ prayed and the transfiguration was going on. But they awoke before it closed, and were overwhelmed with the brightness of His garments, and the glory of His person, and of the two men present. How much of this was for Christ's comfort, and how much for the Apostles instruction, we know not.

But, as the saints departed, the Apostles were bewildered; and St. Peter, always prompt on every occasion, said, "Master, let us make here three Tabernacles; one for Thee, one for Moses,

and one for Elias." Though he did not know what he said, yet the words were not meaningless, but evidently inspired; because they give significancy to the Transfiguration. When Moses went into the Mount to receive authority from God, his first act was to build the Tabernacle, and that was the beginning of the organization of God's kingdom, or Church, for the Hebrews; and in this way they afterwards saw, that the new kingdom of God came through Christ. When Moses received his authority to begin His work, as he came down from the Mount, his face was radiant with the glory of God which had shone on him; but Christ's person and garments shone like the Sun.

There was also a significancy in the meeting of these three persons,—Moses was there as the representative of the Law, there to transfer its Tabernacle to the Sanctuary of Christ's kingdom; Elias, or the Baptist, was there as the representative of the Transition period,—the passing of the Law over to the Gospel; and Christ was there as the Head of the kingdom of God, to pitch the Tabernacle of God among men, which was to last to the world's end, and carry on His work of salvation.

While St. Peter was yet speaking of the Tabernacles, the Father's voice sounded out from the fiery cloud, saying, "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased. Hear Him." Thus the Father transferred the dispensations of Moses and the Baptist to Christ; this was God's commandment to them, which they were to teach the world. When the disciples heard God's voice, it was to them as the thunders of Sinai were to the people, when the Law was delivered,—they were terrified and fell on their face; but Christ came and touched them, and they arose and found themselves alone with Him; and He charged them to tell no man of the vision, until the Son of Man was risen from the dead. And it looks as if Christ's human nature then had first revealed to it, not only a vision of His spiritual body which He saw in the Saints, but also the glory which would fill His

human body, after its resurrection, and ascension, and glorification in the Godhead. The necessity for the concealment of this is plain,—it was an intimation of the passing over of the Law and kingdom of Israel, to Christ's Gospel and kingdom; and the revelation of the purpose would have caused His immediate arrest and crucifixion.

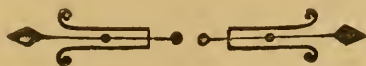
Christ had recently told the Apostles of His coming death, now He showed them the glory which would follow it in Paradise, and assured them of His resurrection from death; and that they would be alive to see Him after it, because then they might report His Transfiguration. And we learn from this, that the Saints in Paradise have glorified spiritual bodies; and that they not only know what is going on in this world, but that it is possible for them to appear here,—but impossible for mortals to communicate with them, for Moses and Elias talked only with Christ.

And the question the Apostles asked Christ, why the Scribes say that Elias must come before Christ, as it was answered by Him, warrants the interpretation, that the Elias at the Transfiguration was John the Baptist; because He never speaks of any other Elias. And in this case declared that he had come, and had been martyred; and He, as the Son of Man, would likewise suffer. Moses had led the Israelites out of bondage, through the Red Sea; Christ would deliver the world from bondage through His blood, and bring all believers in Him into the glorious liberty of the Saints in Paradise, and children of God in Heaven.

Christ said, the Law and the Prophets were until John, then salvation could be had by repentance and faith in Christ; and now that transition way of salvation was passing away, John had departed, and Christ's kingdom was coming; and the Transfiguration helped to confirm the Apostles faith and trust in Christ—and to hear, believe, and obey whatever He told them to do; because after St. John was permitted to speak of it, he said,

“We beheld His glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father;” and of all the wonders, and glories of our Lord’s earthly life, there is nothing more wonderful than this; nothing up to that time that so assured the Apostles of immortality beyond death, and of the glory which awaits the righteous beyond it. The Baptist, as Christ’s Forerunner, had already reported there what He had done on earth; and now he and Moses returned to tell the Saints that He would soon finish His mission to the earth, and be with them in the spirit in Paradise.

As the Apostles then first understood that the Elias of Prophecy was not Elijah the Tishbite, so also did they then first learn, that the Elijah there present was John the Baptist: and Christ gave them some further instruction, telling them the object of John’s coming was to restore all things; by restoration, He meant to restore the spirituality of the Law, the necessity of faith and repentance for salvation, which had been over-ridden by the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, and that He would finally suffer a violent death as John had.





CHAPTER XXV.

AFTER THE TRANSFIGURATION.

After the Transfiguration, Christ and the three Apostles remained all night in the mountain, and when they came down they found the Scribes and Pharisees questioning the other Apostles, and all the people came running to meet Him; and there was another of those marvellous scenes, so often witnessed during His ministry.

Those enemies had taken advantage of Christ's absence to interview the Apostles, to try and find out by what necromancy or demoniacal power they wrought miracles; and when Christ came, He asked them what they had been discussing with the Scribes and Pharisees? And before they could answer, a man came kneeling down to Him, saying, "Have mercy on my son, he is a lunatic, and hath a dumb spirit, and he taketh him, tearth him, and he crieth out, and foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away; and I spake to Thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not." And here, again, the attempt of Christ's enemies to prove fraud resulted in increasing His fame.

It was the first time that the Apostles had failed to work a miracle, and while Christ was absent His enemies hoped to discover the cause of their failure, and solve the mystery of His power; but their failure was His opportunity to show whence

their power came, and that it never failed Him. He said to the man, all things are possible to him who believeth; and he cried out "Lord I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." And on that confession, He rebuked the Evil Spirit who, throwing the child down, came out of him; and the child was as one dead, but Christ raised him up and he was well.

Christ had recently told the Apostles of His death, and His absence had weakened their faith, and they could not heal the child; so there was a lesson for the disciples and the Scribes and Pharisees, as well for His disciples for all time, that prayers offered for children in faith will prevail. But the disciples were too dull to perceive, that their power depended as much on their faith, as the healing did on the faith of the afflicted; so when they came into the house they asked, "Why could not we cast him out?" And He said, because of their unbelief, and neglect of prayer and fasting; He had prescribed no fasts, but they had probably neglected those of the Jewish Church.

And then, as if their particular unbelief was respecting His death, He renewed the declaration, saying: "The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after He is killed He shall rise the third day." And this was the third time Christ had spoken of His death and resurrection within a few weeks; its nearness apparently was weighing upon His mind. He mysteriously revealed to the Scribes and Pharisees by the sign of Jonah, that He would be three days in the tomb; but He plainly declared it to His disciples. Yet they understood not His words, and were afraid to ask Him; but after His resurrection they saw how His death was a preparation for His kingdom, and it helped them to believe in Him, as the second person of the Godhead, as it has ever since assured men of it.

This narrative carries probability on its face, as well as has internal evidence of it in every feature, and is in perfect

harmony with the Gospel revelation; there is no other example like it in the annals of mankind. And to believe it a story invented, is to ascribe more genius to the authors than was ever shown by any other men; and to believe that three Evangelists conspired to lie about it, requires more faith than to believe the miracle. There was no concert, because each one relates the scene differently, and they confess their own unbelief and dullness; and if there is anything that can be believed on human testimony, that was a real scene, that took place when the Son of God was incarnate on earth, and in conflict with wicked men and devils; and is an example of the way He trained His apostles to believe in Him, and prepared them to understand the mysteries of His kingdom, and organize it after His death and ascension to Heaven.

It is apparent from the incident following, that the Apostles now so far understood our Lord, that they believed He was to leave them before long; and their carnal minds, and human ambition began to show itself. They saw no Messianic kingdom, and they were all in the dark as to what would come after His departure; but evidently they expected some kind of a society or kingdom, which would perpetuate His doctrines, and continue His power in working miracles. And so they began disputing among themselves, who should be chief, when the Master departed. Who were the claimants for superiority, or what the nature of the reasoning was, is not related; but it took place on the road while they were returning to Capernaum. And with the truth of honest men, and the simplicity of little children, the apostles relate these examples of their unbelief, their want of sympathy with our Lord who had told them of His death—only to set them wrangling about who was to be the greatest. Then contrast this with the vehement boldness with which they afterwards taught His resurrection, and the cheerfulness with which they suffered martyrdom for its confirmation; and we have

here such testimony for our Lord's Divinity,—so perfect, so incisive, so convicting, and in such a way as none but the wisdom of Almighty God could have devised.

Christ was not present when the Apostles disputed about the supremacy, but it was after He had spoken of giving the keys to Peter; and proves that the Apostles knew nothing of a supremacy in Peter, or any one of them,—but they perceived that Christ knew their thoughts and words, whether He were present or absent. And when He asked what they had disputed about by the way, they answered not; and were ashamed of their selfishness and want of sympathy for Him.

But He, instead of rebuking them, used it to enforce that great principle of His religion, which He exemplified in His own life, and in which His own Divine greatness was best seen,—His humility—as the only way to His Father's love and favor.

All the Apostles were concerned in the shameful dispute, and were present to receive the rebukeful instruction,—that he who desired to be first, should be last and servant of all. Paganism never taught humility; the Greeks and Romans had no word to express it in our Lord's meaning; Judaism had lost it, buried under the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees.

And then how simple and lovely the way He illustrated His meaning. Calling a little child, and taking him in His arms, He said those memorable words, which forever exalted meekness, and humility, and docility in hearing and believing the truth; and which have ever since made children the chief object of the love and care of His Church, and the way to the Father's love and blessings: "Whosoever receiveth one such in My name, receiveth Me; and whoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him who sent Me." He instituted baptism to receive them into His covenant and kingdom, that they might be regenerated and sanctified, before the world had won, or sullied, them by its false glitter and promises, and the deceitfulness of sin. And He

demanding the confiding love, and faith, and docility of childhood in all who would become His disciples; that we should go to the Heavenly Father, as children do to an earthly one for the supply of all our wants, both temporal and eternal; and since Christ, there never was a child, who did not believe in Him, and have his little heart touched with tender emotion, when he was old enough to understand the story of His love.

It was probably while Christ was at Capernaum this time, that the Collectors of the Tribute Money were collecting the annual tax of half a shekel, about thirty cents, which was demanded from every Jew, for support of the Temple worship at Jerusalem; it was called atonement, or ransom money to the Lord. These men asked St. Peter, if his Master paid the tax? And he said, Yes; so it is presumed that He had paid it before, as He carefully observed all the ordinances of the Jewish Church; and Peter told Christ of the demand, and He asked him of whom do the kings of the earth take tribute, of their own subjects or strangers? And he answered, of strangers. The question aimed to show Peter His exemption from the tax, because His soul required no atonement, and He was Lord of the Temple.

Peter had witnessed Christ's power over the laws of nature, and sickness and death; but now He manifested it in a new way over the animal kingdom belonging to God, and the financial world administered by man. He sent him to the sea to catch a fish, and find the tribute money in its mouth; and his faith wavered not at the singular command, and he found the exact amount required; and Christ told him to give it "for Me and thee." Though sinless, and exempt as Lord of the Temple, He submitted to that as to all the ordinances of the Jewish Church,—as an example of obedience, and to fulfill all righteousness; while He showed here as in every instance of His life, where His humanity was concerned, that He submitted as the Son of God, having dominion over all things.

In consequence of Christ's remarks about humility to the Apostles, when He reproved them for disputing about supremacy, their curiosity was excited to know more of what greatness in His kingdom would consist; because they now believed it could not be long before the kingdom appeared, as He had told them—some then living would see it. And the first opportunity, they asked Him, "Who is (*i.e.* will be) the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" And He called a little child unto Him and set him in the midst of them; and with His divine "Verily, I say unto you," declared, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

What He demanded was—the faith, meekness, and docility of childhood; the conversion was a turning from the ambition, and desire for earthly power or distinction they manifested—a devilish spirit—to serve God and do all for His glory. This must be their preparation of heart for regeneration; for one might be converted for a time, and if it did not lead him to the docility of children in going on to repentance, and baptism into the kingdom, it would not avail for salvation. He had had some such converts, and they had gone away without waiting for the kingdom.

Two things were required: first, conversion; second, repentance and becoming like little children,—they were all in God's covenant, and had humble and docile minds to be trained in, and for, the kingdom. And whoso becomes as a little child, is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven; it is childlike faith, childlike love, childlike obedience, and freedom from pride and ambition, which Christ pointed out as constituting Christian greatness. And He showed how deep His love for all such disciples would forever be,—that receiving one such in His Name, would forever be receiving Him; and the awful retribution for rejecting them would be worse than temporal death.

And He foresaw, as He had before foretold, how both Himself, His name, and divine character, and mission, would be received by future generations,—offences, unbelief, and persecutions will come, but woe to the man by whom they come; better suffer any maiming of the body here, than the awful penalty of everlasting fire hereafter. Heaven and Hell are the great motives He urges, to persuade men to godly lives.

And here again He revealed another great mystery of God, and of the Heavenly world from which He came, respecting the ministry of Angels—He so united His teaching, respecting both little children, and the members of His Kingdom, that He implies, that both have guardian angels who minister to them. And they are sent from God's immediate presence in heaven; and we know from His experience and teaching, that angels continually minister between Heaven and Earth, and Paradise, and Hades; besides what other services, we know not exactly, in conveying the spirit of the departing to their new abodes, when they leave this world. They ministered to Him in every exigency of His human life; one, released Peter from prison after Christ's death, another was sent to tell Cornelius his prayers and alms had come up as a memorial before God. And He says, they will be present at the end of the world to assist Him at the Judgment; and nothing is more reasonable if man and the world be related to God, as He represents them.

As the son of Man, He revealed His great office as Saviour, come to save that which is lost; not some, but generally the whole race. He came to save those who will be lost, as well as those who will be saved. No one will fail of salvation by God's will, and only in opposition to His will; it will be only by resisting all He has done in love and mercy, and at personal cost to Himself. And the costliness of His sacrifice, and self-imposed suffering, in giving His son to die in our nature, for our sins, and to save us from an eternal penalty, proved the intensity of His love

and desire for our salvation; and every sinner struggles against God's will when he sins, and works for his own eternal punishment. And to prove this, Christ related the Parable of the Lost Sheep, an appropriate type of a sinner, or straying Christian; it is defenceless against its enemies, and has no instinct like the dog, or bee, to help it return to the fold. And the owner's leaving the ninety-nine to seek the lost one, outshadowed God's love in Christ, who had come to seek and save the lost; Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd; and here He tells how He rejoices over every penitent sinner who comes to Him. And that it is not the "Father in Heaven's will, that one of these little one's should perish;" and He calls all "little ones," who manifest the innocence, meekness, and docility of little children.





CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CHURCH AND THE SEVENTY.

The new kingdom of Heaven—which was growing out of the old kingdom of God—that was to transmit the benefits of Christ's incarnation and sacrifice, He now for the first time called the Church; and this was revealed only to His disciples, as a moral kingdom founded by spiritual force.

He had already taught the Apostles, that His kingdom would be founded on Himself,—the Rock; and now He instructed them that its authority must be supreme, and man's last appeal,—and He, as its king, would ratify and annul in Heaven all they did in His name on Earth.

The mission of the Church was—to continue Christ's work, to preach the Gospel to the poor, to comfort the troubled, carry the glad tidings of salvation everywhere, gather the nations, maintain the new worship, and transmit the ministry and the Gospel unimpaired, until He returns to annex it to His kingdom in Heaven. And it was called "Holy Catholic," in the Creed, because its sacraments would make men righteous; and Catholic because it embraces all the holy angels, and the saints in Paradise, as well as righteous on earth. And whoever refuses to hear the Church, and submit to her discipline, Christ ranked as publicans and heathen. And the Liturgy of the Church authorizes her

ministers to exercise Christ's power in remitting original sin, and absolving penitents who come with repentance and faith: and by her offices to convey the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which He obtained for her since His return to Heaven. And He promised—that where two or three are gathered in His name He will be present with them, and grant whatever is asked the Father in His name.

And the Apostles supposed they had received that full power from Christ before His Ascension, because when they saw a man not of themselves casting out devils, they forbid him. But Christ said, "Forbid him not," for no man doing a miracle in His name would speak lightly of Him, but he would be on their part; and whoever will give a cup of water in His name, and to His disciples, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward;" but whosoever shall offend one of them, "it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea."

The Apostles were then only candidates for the power they were to receive, when the Holy Ghost came; and Christ appointed lay teachers in the transition He was making from Judaism to Christianity. He told the man at Gadera, out of whom He cast devils, to go home and tell how great things God had done for Him; and again, when a man offered to follow Him, but asked first to go and bury his father, Christ said, "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." The Apostles were mistaken in supposing they had then received power as His successors; and even their baptism was not sacramental, but to admit members to Christ's kingdom, that they might receive the Holy Spirit at His coming.

And there is a significance in those unordained men which connects the out-going and in-coming Church of the wilderness with Christ's; because Eldad and Medad prophesied in the wilderness, though they were of neither priestly nor prophetical

order, and ever since Christ's Church has been wholly supported by its laity. St. Peter says, all Christians are "a royal priesthood;" they receive regeneration for their work from the same Holy Spirit who consecrates the priesthood, and will finally receive a share in the reward for all who turn men to righteousness.

Christ repeated the warning against offending the least of His disciples, and of the future penalty of failing of salvation; and they had better make any sacrifice than to be cast into Hell, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. It is impossible that Christ would misrepresent that world,—He had no motive to do so. The fire may be figurative, but it is represented as causing intolerable suffering to the spiritual body, as fire does to the natural body; it is spiritual fire because unquenchable, and there is nothing in nature so like spirit as flame.

And the figure of being salted with fire had reference to the salting of sacrifices for burnt offerings; and salt was a symbol of purity, wisdom and righteousness. And Christ had before said to His disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth;" and He warned them of the peril of losing their saltness, because it is impossible to renew to repentance, those who have been regenerated by the Holy Ghost, if they fall away.

St. Peter asked Christ about the duty of forgiveness, if it should be seven times,—a number signifying completion; and He answered, "I say unto you until seventy times seven." This new standard implied that it should be unlimited, so long as the brother repents and promises amendment, which was the Divine rule in Lamach's case; and that St. Paul interprets, "forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

And Christ spake the Parable of the king reckoning with his servants: the first called owed ten thousand talents, then an enormous sum—ten millions of dollars—representing the sinner's infinite debt to God,—a hopeless bankrupt. And he asked delay,

and promised to pay all. The sum represents also God's gifts of temporal and spiritual blessings, and immortality, and shows how vain the hope to pay it by our self-righteousness. The man had nothing to pay; he worshipped the king, prayed for delay, and was forgiven.

Then that man is made to present a contrast; he seized a servant violently who owed a hundred pence, and demanded payment; and he fell down at his feet, begged for delay, and promised to pay him—but he would not; but ordered his wife, children, and all he had to be sold and payment made. By the Roman law, then supreme in Judea, children were the property of parents, and a father could sell them to slavery; and the Mosaic law permitted insolvent debtor's families to be sold into bondage; Christ as the king, forecasts how He will administer His kingdom and judge it; the merciless will have no mercy, and the tormentors to whom they will be delivered are the worm that will never die and the fire that is not quenched. And His disciples must expect forgiveness from Him as they forgive their fellow men; and all this proves that the Parable was spoken at the time and place where Roman and Hebrew laws had met in Palestine.

No act of our Lord's ministry was more incisive in the exercise of His regal and sacerdotal authority, than the choosing of the seventy disciples to help in His work. The calling of the twelve Apostles, had no visible significance in itself to the Rulers of the Jews; but now, calling a third class of laborers, looked like the organization of a government, and after the order of the the old kingdom, with its high-priest, priest, and levites; and so of a coming kingdom, like that instituted by Moses, at Mt. Sinai, where all things were especially prescribed to him by God.

And as the twelve Apostles represented the Patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel, so also did the seventy now chosen fulfill the type of the seventy elders, Moses selected by God's command. Christ was the High-Priest; the twelve Apostles,

Priests; and the seventy, to be the Levites, or deacons, for His kingdom, which was like the kingdom of God in Heaven, with three Divine Persons ruling, and as His Church now is: and that distinguishes it from all governments, except as they are modeled after it.

In choosing this third order of the ministry, Christ gradually prepared the way for the inauguration of His kingdom, which was to deliver mankind from bondage to sin, and death, and Satan; and proved Himself the Prophet foretold by Moses, whom the people would hear.

The success of Christ's ministry had prepared the way for more laborers; the old kingdom had suffered violence by the multitudes that were leaving it to follow Him, and He was shaking the faith of the people in its Rulers, exposing their hypocrisy, false teaching, and unrighteous lives.

The time for concealing Christ's divine nature, and purposes, was drawing to its end; and there was much training yet needed to prepare His disciples to help forward the great transition going on, and to succeed to His authority when His kingdom was empowered. But the Seventy were only candidates for holy orders, officiating as lay Levites, who would succeed to the second order of the ministry, when the Apostles were consecrated to succeed to His Apostleship and High-Priesthood, and when seven deacons would be called to their office.

In all those acts, there was a visible preparation for a visible kingdom, for the transfer of the Levitical to the Christian priesthood, and from sacrificial to sacramental worship; but it was by slow and unapparent stages, guided by such infinite wisdom, that it caused no open rupture; and all the types of Mt. Sinai were fulfilled and completed in the kingdom of God, and of Christ; for that is what the Christian Church is, the blossom and fruit on the branch and stem of Jesse. And how plain, as well as wonderful, all this appears now, as we look back two thou-

sand years to Christ, and then back fifteen centuries more to the preparations, which the Son of God then began, and compare it with the three orders of the ministry, that have preserved and transmitted the Gospel and Church, under the very form in which the kingdom of God in Heaven is administered, by the three Divine Persons of the Most Holy Trinity.

It is apparent from Christ's commission to the Seventy, how the aspect of things had changed since the twelve Apostles were sent out; how the animosity of the Rulers had increased, and the tide of opposition was rising and extending; neither the Apostles nor the Seventy had any properly ministerial functions; the field was white to harvest, but they had no authority to call nor any power to ordain new laborers, but were to pray the Lord of the harvest to send them; and they were to go forth as lambs among wolves, to carry neither money nor garments, but trust in Him for support and protection, and to be gracious, though they were hated and persecuted; which shows that the animosity to Christ was extending to His teachers. Hence it is evident that they needed to believe in Him, and be trained by Him, to go on such a mission. But their message was not only to preach repentance and the kingdom at hand, but "Peace;" and if they were not well received, their peace would return to them.

The Apostles were sent to preach to the Rulers and people generally, that the kingdom was at hand; but the Seventy, when persecuted, were to depart, warning the people, "Be ye sure the kingdom of God has come nigh to you;" and that it would be more tolerable for Sodom in the judgment than for that city; and He named two cities that had rejected Him, and pronounced a woe on Capernaum,—then one of the most beautiful cities of the Holy Land—which has been so fulfilled, that in our day its former site is not certainly known. And then, even though they had not received consecration by the Holy Spirit for their

lay work,—yet whoever heard them heard Him, and whoever despised them despised Him; and despising Him they despised God the Father who sent Him. In all this it is seen how everything was rapidly changing, and tending to some grand climax, which neither the Rulers of the Jews, nor Christ's chosen teachers, yet understood.

The Seventy's report to our Lord, on their return from their first mission, is very brief; no mention of the cities visited, nor details of the work done. But they returned with joy, that they had believed and trusted in Him; joy, that they had been honored by Him to assist in working for Him, and preparing the way for His kingdom,—works which they saw God alone could have empowered them to do. And this must have been increased by His reply to their report, that He saw Satan fall as lightning from Heaven, when he was cast out for his rebellion there—an incidental corroboration that He lived in Heaven once; and that He, too, rejoiced that the devils were subject unto them through His name, as it was an assurance of His final triumph; and He increased their power over the devils, so that they could by no means hurt them. Notwithstanding, this was not so much a cause for rejoicing, as that their names were written in Heaven. From the time of Moses, it was a common belief of the Israelites that all in covenant with God had their names recorded in books in Heaven.

The report also rejoiced Christ, and He thanked the Father for these humble believers in Him, who had become co-workers in accomplishing His mission into our world. Although He knew their work was hastening Him towards the last scenes in Gethsemane and Calvary, yet He could rejoice; because He knew His power over death, and the glory it would bring to Himself and millions of mankind. He assured them that the Father had committed all power and dominion over Creation to Him, as the Son of Man; and none knew the Father but the Son, and he to

whom He will reveal Him. What monstrous presumption for any one to say, were He not the Son of God; and how utterly unimaginable for any mere man to conceive and utter such an idea, or to have made up such a story? And how certainly its truth is borne out and confirmed by all the mysteries of His life. These two things witness, each for the other, that the Gospel is the Word of God, that it is impossible a human mind could conceive such a series of events,—so harmonious, so probable in their details, involving so many mysteries,—unless Jesus Christ were the Son of God, as well as of Man.

This interview with His disciples was concluded by Christ's identifying Himself with the prophecy of Haggai, as the longed for Desire of all nations; and assuring them that it was a blessed thing to have lived in His time, to witness His works,—leaving them to infer how vastly greater the blessing, to have been honored by Him to assist in His labor.

And it came to pass at another time, when our Lord had retired with His disciples for prayer, that, when He ceased, one of them asked Him to teach them to pray as John had taught his disciples. This may have been one of the Seventy, or one who had been John's disciple; and was not present when He gave His disciples the form, "Our Father." It was usual for the Rabbis to give their pupils forms of prayer; and Christ gave them the same prayer. John gave his disciples a form, but no hint of its nature is preserved; Christ's is so comprehensive as to include all temporal and spiritual wants, all we need for time and for eternity; and His Church has ever since used it in all the offices of His religion.

And then, as if with reference to the man who asked for the prayer, He spake the Parable of the friend going to a friend for a gift; to enforce the duty of earnest and importunate prayer. If the prayer be refused, because it is midnight, and the children in bed, and the door fastened; nevertheless, persistence will carry

the point, and obtain the request. How much surer they might be, that the Heavenly Father's love and compassion will be moved by sincere and persevering prayer. He promises that whoso asks shall receive; and God will give His Holy Spirit to those who ask, more readily than earthly parents will good things to their children.

It is probable that the substance of several of Christ's discourses were repeated several times, in different places, and to persons of similar character; and that He often dined with Scribes and Pharisees, and Publicans and Sinners. And St. Luke repeats an incident, similar to St. Mark's account of His dining with a Pharisee, with variations which render it probable it was on another occasion.

The Pharisee marvelled that He sat down to dine, without washing His hands; Christ ever observed, in the most refined manner, all the courtesies and requirements of a perfect Manhood. And this remark of the Pharisees, showed that at this time, He did not do as His custom was; and what followed showed His motive. For we see His Divine courtesy, in that He did not seek occasions to obtrude instruction, but only used them as opportunities offered; and here, He made it a means of imparting a useful lesson.

And if Christ's words seem harsh, or discourteous, we must remember that He spake then in love and sorrow, and to try to make the Pharisees see how they looked in God's sight, and to make them repent; calling them by name, He accused them of making the outside of the cup and platter clean,—by their self-righteousness, prayers to be seen of men, and tithing herbs, and ostentatious alms-giving,—while within they were full of hypocrisy and excess.

Christ did not condemn those acts, but the way they did them. He transferred fasting and alms to His Church, as duties expressive of obedience to God; and self-sacrifice, to take the

place of the burnt sacrifices of the old kingdom. They are hard Christian duties ; and most Christians fall below the Pharisees, who gave a tenth for the support of Divine worship, and three or four tenths more for religious objects ; and whoever neglects these Christian sacrifices, never will know whether his selfishness is overcome, and his love of God sincere. But our Lord had not discharged all His duty by the rebuke and instruction, but denounced woes against the Scribes and Pharisees for their pride and hypocrisy ; and upon the Lawyers, for their extortion and robbing of others by their inordinate demands for their services ; and He accused them as the posterity of the Prophet-killers, because they kept in repair the tombs of the men their fathers murdered.

And He concluded this discourse with a Prophecy, which He called, “the Wisdom of God,” that that generation would persecute and slay the Apostles and Prophets He would send ; but withholding the final act of His own death, which would fill up the measure of its iniquities, He said, “the blood of all the Martyrs from Abel to Zacharias would be required of it.” The Pharisees were enraged at the prophecy, and tried to provoke Him to say something they could lay hold of to accuse Him to the Rulers, and put Him to death ; but His wisdom was greater than their cunning.





CHAPTER XXVII.

TEACHING IN THE CITIES AND VILLAGES.

Christ sent out the seventy disciples again, into the cities and villages, where He intended to follow them; but the Gospels do not tell what their course was. And we only catch a sight here and there, of His doings; though He apparently did not return to Capernaum, until He went to Jerusalem to the Feast of Tabernacles, the Fall before His crucifixion. As He came to fulfill all righteousness, according to the Law, He was probably present always at the three great festivals, when all pious Jews were required to present themselves,—though the Evangelists relate but little of these visits; for they recorded nothing merely to gratify curiosity, but only to show His obedience to the Law, and how He prepared them, and the way, for the transfer of the old kingdom to the new one, and for the duties which would devolve on them, after His mission had ended.

He said, the fields are white to harvest. And this going out of increased laborers into all the cities and villages, must have shaken the whole land; and the increase of His fame and mighty works, and caused a corresponding increase of hatred and watchfulness of His enemies.

One day a lawyer came tempting Him, and asked what he should do to inherit eternal life; and the question reveals how

Christ's teaching had taken root in the land, that the old idea of working out salvation by the Law, was dispelling, whether he were in earnest or no; and Christ told him to love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself, which has always been the whole of true religion—because it leads to obedience to all God's requirements, and that brings grace to do all duties to neighbors.

The lawyer acknowledged Christ had answered rightly; but willing to justify himself, and not believing in Christ, or wishing to be His follower, he asked, "Who is my neighbor?" He did not believe the Samaritans came under that head, and Christ spake the Parable of the Good Samaritan. A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, who stripped, wounded, and robbed him, leaving him on the road-side half dead; and a priest went by and paid no attention to him; and a Levite also came along, and looked on him, and passed by on the other side; but a Samaritan saw the wounded man, and had compassion on him, washed and bound up his wounds, put him on his own beast, and took him to an inn, paid his fare, and became responsible for him until he should be well. And Christ asked the lawyer, which of the three was the man's neighbor? The lawyer would not call the Samaritan by his name, but said, "He who showed mercy;" and Jesus said unto him, "Go thou and do likewise," and in this way rebuked his bigotry, and taught him how to show mercy.

As He went through the cities and villages teaching, going towards Jerusalem, some one asked Him, "Lord are there few that will be saved?"

He had answered this question before in His Sermon on the Mount; saying, the gate is narrow and the way strait, and few there be that find it; and now He adds a new motive to strive to enter, because some who seek will not be able. Not that there is no room, not that His salvation is not sufficient for all;

but unbelief, or indolence, engrossment by this world, will prevent many of that generation from finding it.

And He declared with His Divine authority, "I say," that there is a limit to the Father's mercy and long suffering; and so to human probation, when the door of the kingdom will be shut and it will be too late to cry for mercy. The disciples knew that under the Law, there was God's solemn warning to the reprobate,—that, if they despised His mercy in life, at death He would mock at their calamity, and laugh when their fear came.

This warning was for a disciple, and so for all Christians; that, if they are not faithful unto death, at the judgment He will tell them, though they have eaten and drunk at his table, and taught in His name, "I know you not from whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity." And they will have their lot with the lost in Hell; and the old saints, and the Gentiles shall inherit the kingdom of God, while they will be thrust out,—an awful warning to the Rulers of His Church, if they are unfaithful in doing the work committed to them. And He concluded, "there are last which shall be first, and first which shall be last." The ministers of His Church may, in the great day of reckoning, be found less worthy of high places in His Heavenly kingdom, than the faithful laymen who did their humble duty well; they will be first there, and those who were first here will there be last.

The fame of Christ had now become so general, and the fact known that the people had proposed to make Him a king, that Herod Antipas, whom Josephus says killed John the Baptist because of his influence over the people, was alarmed; as Herod his father was, thirty years before, when he ordered the murder of the children of Bethlehem; now fearing the loss of his Governorship, sought Christ's life. Is this fiction? Did the Evangelists invent these stories, and the characters and acts of

these two men? No! because history confirms both, as well as the Gospel narrative.

It is not related how Herod's animosity showed itself, but Christ had some friends among the Pharisees, because they informed Him that Herod sought to kill Him; and His reply, scorning his threat, calling him a fox, and telling him He would work miracles until He was ready to be perfected, and rise from the dead, shows His consciousness of His divine power, and confirms its truth, as it is represented in the Gospel. And it proves that He knew the time of His death was approaching, but it was not in Herod's power to touch Him; and that on the third day He would rise from the dead, perfected in a spiritual body.

Nevertheless, He must walk a little longer, and die at Jerusalem; all the types and prophecies foretold Jerusalem as the place where He would suffer. And then He utters that mournful but tender lament over the City of David, and the Temple of God.

“Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets,” telling how He longed to gather the people, and they would not, and their House was becoming desolate,—words He repeated the last time He visited the Temple, Wednesday before His crucifixion. They were not words of reproach more than compassion, which none but God could have expressed under the circumstances; not even any mention of His own personal sorrow for His rejection and coming death, but only His desire for Israel's salvation; for Jerusalem to Him represented His own covenant people, and the grief He felt at the desolation they were to bring on themselves, the city and Temple desolate, and the daily sacrifice and worship of God, which had been there a thousand years, about to cease forever. A recent visitor to Jerusalem confirms His prophecy, saying, “All is so mournful, so inexpressibly solemn. The very sunshine on those crumbling walls is unlike sunlight elsewhere, and has no cheer, no gladness

about it. In this sad city there is nothing to talk of but ruins, and its story, decay, and sad memorials."

As the time for Christ's departure approached, He devoted His instruction more particularly to the Twelve and the Seventy who began to be more with Him. And He spake to them the Parable of the rich man whose abundant harvests led him to propose to tear down his barns and build greater, and then to take his ease and enjoy himself; but God that night required his life; "And so is he," He said, "who layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God." And He warned them to take no thought for earthly things, for God, who feeds the ravens, and clothes the lilies more gorgeously than even Solomon was clothed, would take care of them. He would give them the kingdom of God, and by their labors and alms for it they would lay up treasures in Heaven.

And they must gird up their loins, and let their light shine, like servants who are waiting for their Lord; for such servants shall be blessed when He returns to the wedding. And He will make them sit down at His table and serve them, and make them Rulers over all He hath; while He also warned them that he who knew his Lord's will and did it not, would be beaten with many stripes. And He declared He had come to kindle a fire on earth, which was already kindled; and He had a baptism to be baptized with, and His soul was straitened until it be accomplished.

He did not wish to conceal what He foreknew of the tumult, tribulation, and divisions His religion would make among men; because His Kingdom would not only divide households, and arraign parents and children against one another, but would also go forth to break in pieces the old Paganism of the Gentile world, and increase the strife and divisions He had already kindled; and it was a prophecy of what has been going on ever since; His Divinity denied, His ministry rejected, His Church divided, and

rent by heresies and schisms. And, could any one but God have foreseen this? Or have foretold, that it will go on until the end of the world, until His kingdom has lost its dominion over men, and faith in Him is almost lost, and the corruption become so general, that God can endure it no longer; and the world will be destroyed by fire, as it was for corrupting itself before, by water, and the unfaithful will perish, together with the unbelievers.

And although He was thinking of His own awful baptism by blood, it looks as if the anticipation of the evils He had foretold, weighed even more heavily upon His mind than His Own fate; then, turning to the people, He addressed to them one of those familiar discourses, easily understood by them, respecting judgments of the weather by the state of the clouds and winds. They could discern them, and determine what the future would be; why could they not discern, that His doctrines and miracles that were agitating society around them, proved that the Christ, who was to shake all nations, had come. And He concludes with the warning to them, to make haste, judge and choose, what is right—between His Doctrines and the Law, between Him and His enemies,—before it was too late.

There is but little recorded of the events of this journey, through the towns and villages at this time; but soon after, Christ and His disciples arrived at Bethany, where He commonly made His home, when He was at Jerusalem or in its vicinity. And we notice on what friendly terms the Lord was with that humble family; because Martha's complaint to Him, respecting her sister, shows her confidence in His consideration; and how sure she was, that He would order even their household affairs with justice.

And we learn from this incident, the character of the two sisters. Mary had heard Christ, and not only believed in Him but had chosen the good part, to be His disciple; and He told Martha, it shall never be taken away from her. And then, with

a divine grasp, the Lord condenses our salvation to a point,—only one thing needful; that is, faith in Him, which makes one superior to the anxieties and cares for the things of this life. Martha believed in Christ, too; because St. John tells us later in her history, that Jesus loved both Martha and Mary. But at that time, which was six months earlier, she might not have attained that degree of faith her sister had.

Little incidents like this, let us see into the hearts and homes of the people of Judea, all these years ago,—which wonderfully corroborate the whole Gospel narrative; they are so simple, so natural, so like to what they would be if Christ were the long expected Messiah, the Son of God,—to whom earthly distinctions are nothing, and purity of heart, and holiness of life is everything—that they give a stronger assurance of the truth and reality of the scene, than even His miracles. Because there is no suspicion, or probability that they were recorded to prove His Divinity; while they do show the exercise of both humanity and Divinity.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

Our Lord waited at Simon's house until the morning, when He went up to Jerusalem. It was His custom always, when near Jerusalem, to be present at the Daily Sacrifice; and if He arrived at Bethany the evening before, it is probable that the next day was the beginning of the Feast; and He went there to teach. And it was there, in the Temple, that He was told of the recent atrocity of Pilate, in suppressing a revolt among the Galileans; when he savagely punished the rioters, while they were engaged in the religious duty of offering sacrifice, and caused their blood to mingle with the blood of the animals.

And here, as on all occasions, He used the incident to give the reporters a useful lesson; not a word is said of Pilate's mercilessness,—that would be repeated to His injury; but He knew the minds of the persons present, that they presumed it was

God's punishment for their sins; and He said, "Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish." He does not say they were not punished for their sins, but they were not the chiefest sinners in Galilee; admitting that there is a connection between sin and punishment, but that it is not in man's power to trace it, and it was not for them to judge.

And again He asked, if they thought the men on whom the tower in Siloam fell were the chiefest sinners there. And Himself answered as before, Nay; and unless they repented, they would likewise perish. Repentance was the constant theme of His teaching, and the only ground with faith for admission to His kingdom; the only hope, through His one great sacrifice, for salvation. And then to illustrate His meaning He spoke the

PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE.

The ancient Church was called the Lord's vineyard; God was its Lord; the single fig tree, with its sweet fruit, was His covenant people, Israel. But it was barren; three years the Lord had been on earth seeking fruit from it; and now He, the Dresser, was going to cut it down, because it had borne none. It cumbered the ground,—it occupied the place He wanted for His Vine and His Vineyard; and then He represents Himself as pleading for it, for one year more, or until His present year of labor had ended, and then it will be cut down. It was a warning of the end, which was fast coming to the old kingdom; it was a practical and personal application to the Rulers of the Jews.

Here and there were Pharisees who treated Christ courteously; but it does not appear whether it was from friendly motives, or that they might know more of His doctrine, or better scrutinize His miracles. One warned Christ that Herod had evil intentions towards Him, and another invited Him to dine on the Sabbath, when there was a man present who had the dropsy;

which looks as if it were intentional to see if He would heal the man.

And knowing the plot, Christ asked the lawyers and Pharisees if it were lawful to heal on the Sabbath? And they held their peace. And He healed him, and let him go. And then He did something quite as wonderful,—they would not answer Him, and He showed them He could make them keep silent. “Which of you having a beast fallen into the ditch will not pull him out on the Sabbath?” And their silence was sealed up with shame. No shrewd lawyer or crafty Pharisee ever once got the better of Christ in such like attempts, and what is this but infallibility, and God alone is infallible.

Then He put forth a Parable to them, when He saw their pride, and anxiety for recognition of rank and place; and by calling it the invitation to a wedding, He conveyed a lesson which was adapted to the acuteness of such minds as were present; enforcing the duty of humility, and that especially as essential for admission to His kingdom, and to the Last Great Supper of the Lamb; telling them how they would fare then, and there, with the pride and desire for rank and place they now manifested. And He concluded with advice for the practice of humility in another way, which no doubt seemed ridiculous to them,—though it was the way of doing good to the poor, and those who could make no returns,—that would bring eternal rank and exaltation from God. One among the guests was a true Israelite; he believed in the coming kingdom of God, though he did not understand the meaning of his own words, nor the blessedness of eating its Sacramental Bread. And then Christ especially addressed to him the parable intended for all present, and for all mankind, until His kingdom is gathered up at the Judgment, to be taken to the kingdom in Heaven above.

It was the Parable of the man who made a great supper,

and bade many to come for all things were ready; and all excused themselves, because of some worldly consideration. The master, being angry, told the servants to go into the streets, and lanes, and bring the poor, the halt, the maimed, and the blind; and when this was done, and they said, "Yet there is room," he sent them into the highways and hedges to compel men to come in, that his house might be filled; and declared that none of them bidden who had refused, should be admitted.

This Parable is obscure in some things, and He gave no explanation to His disciples; while it was applicable to His hearers it was also prophetic, and would be best understood by future generations.

In one feature, it looked back to all the world's past history, to the way God's truth and revelation had always been received by mankind; and it foretold how they would continue to be until time's end. The cares, and duties, and pleasures of this life, being a perpetual excuse among men, for not paying to God the obligations of love and gratitude for His love and mercies, by obedience to His Church and Law.

God is the certain Man who made the Feast; it was the Tree of Life in Paradise; after the expulsion, it was the Bread and Wine of Sacrifice; since Christ, the Sacramental Bread and Wine, which gives the eternal life man lost by first eating the fruit of the forbidden tree.

Or it may refer to the Baptist's call to the Jews, when God sent him to tell them all things were ready for them; it is so comprehensive, that it includes the call of the Baptist to the Jews, or to Christ's personal ministry, or to the sending out of the Apostles and Seventy. For in all these instances, all things were ready for the meek and humble who were willing to believe and come.

In the first instance, the guests were simply invited to come; in the second case they were to be brought in; but in the third

and last, they were to be compelled from the highways and hedges. It possibly refers to the three covenants of God with man: the first with Adam,—of Sacrifice, in the Blood of Animals; the second, with Abraham—of Circumcision, in the Blood of Man; the third, in and with Christ, in the Christian Covenant of Baptism,—in the Blood of the God-Man, through whose blood under the former covenants, all had received the sign and seal to admit them to His Great Supper in Heaven.

But the compulsory work was not to begin until the Apostles received their great commission after the resurrection, to go into all the highways and hedges of the world, and compel men to come in by the wonderful story of the Son of God's love in coming down from Heaven, and showing His love unto death for their salvation. The Sacramental Bread and Wine of His Church is the Great Supper,—because it is the completion of the Pascal Supper, because it increases spiritual strength in the receiver, and because it entitles the receivers to the Lamb's Supper in Heaven.

Christ had already told these Pharisees, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you;" and ever since, all who have refused the compulsory call to His kingdom, belong to the class He declares "shall never taste My Supper."

The conclusion of the Parable, "I say unto you, none of those men under former dispensations, or now, who were called and refused, shall taste My supper," was to proclaim Himself the Author and Giver of salvation, and eternal life, under all the dispensations. No word is said of the way such an announcement was received; but, as things were, it was certainly prudent for Him to soon leave Jerusalem.



CHAPTER XXVIII

RETURN FROM JERUSALEM.

After the feast, Christ departed from Jerusalem, followed by many people, going towards Galilee; and from that time there was a decided change in His teaching and doctrines; and the Parables are less obscure, and designed to interest all classes. Christ often stopped on His journeys to instruct the people, or work miracles; at this time He taught them respecting discipleship to Him,—saying, they must be willing to leave wife and children, father and mother, and hate their own lives also for His sake.

He meant hate only in a martyr spirit, because His own example was love; but they must endure persecution, as He had left Heaven, and come down to suffer here for their sakes. Each one must patiently bear the cross of the hatred of man, the shame of excommunication by the Rulers, or anything opposing their confessing Him :

And He spake the Parable of a man's building a tower, or a king's going to war; each must reckon the cost before he begins, lest failure expose him to ridicule. So they, likewise, each one must deliberately bear His cross to obtain His salvation. That is, make all things here subordinate to doing God's will. And He enforced the lesson by the figure of salt losing its savor, which is

thrown away, and trodden down by men; so they would be rejected by Him, if they should be unfaithful disciples.

At another place many publicans and sinners were present, with Scribes and Pharisees, and Christ knew the latter murmured because He manifested no displeasure at such persons; and He spake the Parable of the Lost Sheep, that the shepherd will leave ninety and nine to seek one straying; and when he finds it, calls his neighbors to rejoice with him. And then He told them news from Heaven, which God only could know, that the angels rejoice when one sinner repents, more than over ninety and nine who need no repentance.

It was a rebuke of their unbelief and self-righteousness; telling them He had come from Heaven, into this wilderness of men estranged from God, to seek sinners, as prophecy said the Messiah would do.

Then Christ spake the Parable of the Lost Piece of Silver, a woman seeks it—showing He had come to transfer His love and care for sinners, to His bride the Church; the coin stamped with the king's image, represented a disciple signed and sealed in His Name; these the Church will seek when from infirmity they fail, and are lost for time from His treasury. And He repeated by His divine, "I say unto you," the angels of God will rejoice over every such penitent who returns.

If the angels rejoiced at creation, and when Jesus was born, how reasonable that they should rejoice in men's salvation? He said every Christian has a guardian angel in Heaven; and St. Paul's commentary on His words is, "They minister to all who shall be heirs of salvation."

And the Parable of the Two Sons, is another example of Christ's teaching the Scribes and Pharisees, and telling them how they looked before God, in comparison with penitent Publicans and sinners; and it applied also to the Church and nation. For the elder son represented the Israelites, and the younger son

the Gentiles,—who departed from the Father's house, and lost their righteousness and knowledge of His law, and were feeding on the husks of their false religions.

And it had a future application, the elder son to any Christian unthankful for God's mercies, and murmuring because the less righteous are more blessed; or the younger son who squanders his youthful innocence and baptismal grace in sin; and then comes to himself and resolves to return, and then the Father hastens to receive him, and the angels rejoice. The Father did not say the elder son must rejoice, because my son is found; but your brother is found. The lesson is—separation from God, is misery; union with Him, is peace and salvation.

Thus Christ used all the ways of men, as well as the laws of nature, and natural objects, to illustrate God's dealings with them; and there is no other way imaginable by which spiritual mysteries could so well be explained; and none but God could have known so well how to apply them. And we are indebted to those spies, who watched Christ to prove His miracles, necromancy, or His teachings false, for many of the most interesting proofs, that His miracles were by the power of God, and His doctrines the truth of God; and notwithstanding their hatred He proved His Divine love, by striving to make them believe in Him, and to repent.

And He spake the Parable of the unjust steward, which is general as well as personal, and universal in its application. God is the rich man, and the Rulers of His Church, the unjust steward. He was accused of wasting his lord's goods; and the charge was just,—he was dishonest; because when called to give his account, he resolved on more dishonesty, and to implicate others for his benefit. And when his lord heard of it, he commended his worldly wisdom,—not his fraud,—but his shrewd rascally cunning, which wicked men call wise: because he acted more wise than God's children do, in trying to provide a heavenly

habitation for themselves, when they are removed from their earthly stewardship. Christ had come to turn the old Rulers out of God's Kingdom; but they were making no provision for themselves, by forestalling an entrance into His Kingdom.

And He bears down on them with the severe irony,—to make themselves friends of mammon, the God of Riches, of this world's wealth, that when God turns them out, He may receive them into everlasting habitations. It was also a warning to His Disciples, to take heed how they used the stewardship, which He was transferring to them, and act more wisely, that when they were called to account, they might be received into a Heavenly home. And He cautioned them to be faithful in their least duties, because that would ensure fidelity in greater ones; and warned them that it is hopeless to expect anything but eternal poverty in the life to come, if we have been unfaithful to the trust God has committed to us here. Of the true riches of the Heavenly kingdom, He will give them none; and it is useless to try to serve two masters, God and the World,—He wants no divided heart: "He who loveth Father or Mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me;" and he who will not give up all to be Christ's disciple, is not worthy of His love and His great salvation. This is an example of the practical teaching of Christ; there is no circumlocution, He drives the truth right home to the mind and heart.

The Pharisees saw the application of Christ's words, and they could not controvert them; so they derided Him, thus confessing their defeat. And He turned on them, rebuking their covetousness, and self-righteousness, and hypocrisy before men; telling them God knew their hearts, and they were abominable in His sight.

And Christ's boldness increased, in teaching that the kingdom was passing away from the Rulers to the new kingdom of God. He said, "The Law and the Prophets were until John,"

that salvation by the Law then ended; and could be had only by the new way of faith in Him, repentance, and admision to His kingdom. Not that the Law had failed, or would not forever continue in force; but as it was interpreted, by His Gospel and kingdom. And He gave the example of the way they made divorce easy, as one of their perversions of it. Moses allowed it, only because of the hardness of their hearts.

All we know certainly of the intermediate state, where the spirits of men are between death and the resurrection, was taught by Christ. Hebrews and Pagans believed in a kingdom of the dead called Hades, having two departments, Elyseum and Tartarus; and Christ's parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus proves how well the doctrine had been preserved by tradition,—the two men representing the two conditions into which men are there divided.

The beggar's name was Lazarus; the rich man's is not told because he had no name written in the Book of Life. In this world their conditions were perfect contrasts, and in that world they were exactly reversed; the giver of crumbs begged for drops of water, and was denied. And one soon found out that Hell,—and the other, that Heaven,—would be his future eternal abode.

Dives called Abraham father; he was, therefore, one of God's covenant children; and he was told he had had his good things in this life, and there were none for him there. Is this fiction, or even a Parable? Could Christ, who never misrepresented any earthly thing, deceive concerning a spiritual one? The seeing and communicating may be real; we see millions of miles into space, and the worlds there, and can send our thoughts millions of miles into space by one impulse of the will; and spiritual beings may do, as Christ there represents.

We learn also another fact, that death changes neither our identity nor feelings. The rich man was anxious that his breth-

ren shou'd not come to his place of torment; but the saintly beggar's joy is not told,—either because we could not understand it, or else it would make us impatient in bearing our crosses, and waiting for that higher life. And Christ twice proved Abraham's words true, that men would not believe though one rose from the dead; because after He raised Lazarus, and Himself returned to this world from Paradise, and Roman Soldiers testified it to the Rulers, they were as unbelieving as before. And now, modern Pharisees are as unbelieving as they were then.

Where Christ passed His time in Galilee, is not related; but the time for His departure, never to return until after His resurrection, was near. And He then gave the Apostles and Seventy personal instruction for their warning and encouragement. And He concealed from them none of the dangers or difficulties that awaited them; they must suffer for His sake, in doing the work He would commit to them; but men had better be cast into the sea and drowned, than to offend one of the least of them.

While He aimed to inspire their courage to endure persecutions, He cautioned them to beware not to do anything to deserve reproof themselves; and to forgive offences according to the new rule He had given them. Thus He gradually trained and taught them how to go on without Him, when the kingdom should come and rest on them. And they, either conscious of their inability, or ambitious for more power, asked Him to increase their faith; which was asking what God only could do.

And to that petition He replied, if they had faith like a grain of mustard seed, they could say to a neighboring sycamore tree, "Be thou plucked up and cast into the sea, and it would obey." That promise has been said to be hyperbole, and unworthy of Christ; but the Apostles knew He had given them power over devils and diseases, and they did not doubt it,—for they had seen Him command the winds and waves, and they obeyed Him. A self-acting universe, or uncontrolled by its Creator, is pantheism.

There can be no power without a Creator, and no force without law to govern it; no law without a Lawgiver, who can amend, control, or annul it. If Christ could do this, He could also give the power to others, on any conditions He chose.

Here also is another incidental fact, to prove the genuineness of the narrative, that Christ was then in Galilee; because this species of the sycamore, an indigenous mulberry, is said to have grown nowhere in Palestine, but in Lower Galilee.

The sudden transition of our Lord's teaching, to the duties of servants waiting on, and submitting to their Lord, seemingly, was said in reference to the secret thoughts of the Apostles, and the desire for power to do such mighty acts as they knew He could do. But they must wait until He had prepared His kingdom,—then they should eat and drink in it and exercise His power; but, to repress their pride, He said after they had done all, they must confess themselves unprofitable servants—the power belongs only to God. Their petition shows that they believed that in Him was that divine power which controls all natural law, which holds the worlds suspended in space, that gave the movements to all the celestial bodies, that their laws were under His control, and ever ready to obey His will; and without that faith, man's reason and senses are too dull to perceive it. So they had asked for increased faith, because any faith or knowledge short of this is inchoate and un-Christian.





CHAPTER XXIX.

GOING UP TO JERUSALEM.

Christ went from Galilee, passing through Samaria, to the region of Judea beyond Jordan; and but few clews are preserved to tell us where He tarried, or what He said and did; but now and then the veil lifts. He sent messengers before Him to prepare His way; and in a Samaritan village the people declined to receive Him, because He was going to Jerusalem. And James and John were indignant, and asked Him to call down fire from Heaven to consume them. But He rebuked them, saying, He had not come to destroy men, but to save them. Here are two facts to prove the truth and genuineness of the Gospel,—the known animosity of Jews and Samaritans, and the faith in the disciples,—that Christ had power in Heaven and over the elements.

At another village, when a man desired to become a disciple, Christ said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." No more is said of him; he was tried, and found wanting, and went his way. Another said, "I will follow Thee, but let me first go and bid them farewell at home;" but He, too, was unfit for the kingdom of God. Christ knew who could bear His cross; and He sifted out the chaff, and chose only those who had the manhood to endure persecution for His sake.

It was on this journey that He met the ten lepers, who cried from afar for mercy, whom He sent to show themselves to the priests; leprosy was infectious, and lepers lived in the suburbs of towns; it was a type of sin, and supposed incurable but by God. The lepers called Christ, Master, and confessed their faith by asking Him to cure them.

On a former occasion He healed a leper by His touch, proving that He was superior to its infection; but now, without a word or touch, He sent them to the priests; and as they went they were healed. The going to the priests had a three-fold object: first, a trial of their faith; second, it fulfilled the Law, which required a leper to be pronounced clean by the priest, before he could be restored to the congregation; third, it revealed to them that Christ, the Immanuel, had come.

The lepers supposed they were sent to the priests to be cured, but found themselves well before they reached them, and so knew He had restored them; but only one, a Samaritan, returned to give thanks, and with "a loud voice glorified God;" and Christ asked, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?" To this one, He said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." The wholeness was not his healing,—that was done before he returned; it was the other cleansing He had come to bring, cleansing from sin, and for salvation

And there was a lesson for all mankind, and all times, in this: that when they cry to God for mercy, and He hears their cry, if they return Him thanks, then their affliction and recovery have been sanctified to them, and new spiritual blessings will be conferred. While those who feel no gratitude show their unworthiness for their mercies, and are left to perish in their ingratitude and unbelief.

After Christ came into Judea, the hostile Pharisees renew their temptations and assaults, asking Him a question about marriage. There were two parties in the Sanhedrim, holding differ-

ent opinions respecting divorce; and this party belonged to the most powerful one, which admitted divorce for trivial causes. And knowing our Lord's strict views of the Law, supposed He would discountenance it for every cause except adultery; and then, they would accuse Him of teaching contrary to Moses.

And here, again, we perceive how readily He saw through their motives; and how effectually He turned their craft to their condemnation and confusion,—for they were silenced. He first referred them to Moses, and asked what he said; and then told them it was for the hardness of their hearts, the permission was given. Thus He exonerated Moses, and charged the criminality of easy divorce on themselves.

Then He referred them to God's original Law, enacted at man's creation when He did not make the woman from elementary matter, but took her out of the man, that man and wife might be truly one,—never two, always one flesh, joined together by God; that out of them should come the one family, and one world of mankind, to be a perpetual rule for the race,—and not to be severed by man, except for cause given by God. And how this brings out the sacredness of the relation.

But this was not all Christ did; He revoked Moses' permission, and by His own divine authority—which they so often heard,—“I say unto you,” and as the King of the new kingdom, gave a new Law, fixing the life for life, indissoluble by man, except for fornication, and declaring any other divorce adultery; and whoever married the woman, an adulterer,—and so, necessarily, marrying the man, an adulteress.

How much the world is indebted to those atrocious enemies of our Divine Lord, for deeply interesting instruction, which it might never have had but for their malevolence; and how God made their wrath to praise Him, and bless the world.

And St. Matthew confesses, that the disciples were so infected with this Jewish blindness, that they said to our Lord,

that, if such were the case, it were not good for a man to marry. They had not perceived, that God appointed it for the beneficent purpose of making each family a little kingdom for disciplining the members, binding them together in unity, and purity, and godly love, where children are to be trained for the kingdom of God and citizenship on earth, and fitted for the kingdom of Heaven. The tie must be of the strongest human affection, stronger, even, than the filial relationship,—to leave father and mother that the twain may be one. And, as Milton says, it is the only bliss of Paradise which has survived man's expulsion from it.

Soon after, there happened another of those scenes in our Saviour's life, which makes such a lovely Gospel picture; and manifests to us His tenderness to the children, taking them in His arms and blessing them. Visible membership of infants in the kingdom of God existed from the beginning; and always on the parents' faith; they were admitted to the Patriarchal Church by sacrifice, to the Hebrew Church by circumcision, and to the Christian by His appointment, by baptism.

And His words, "Of such is the kingdom of God," have a deep significancy; because in all times the majority of the kingdom have been children. In all times more than half of the race have died before passing that age, or had committed actual sin; and so the kingdom is chiefly composed of them, through the covenants which made them partakers of Christ's redemption. Thus He taught that unconsciousness of the blessing is no bar to the reception of regeneration and the new spiritual life, any more than unconsciousness at the natural birth is any bar to the Adamic life.

So, also, did the laying on of our Lord's hands, the Great Bishop and Shepherd of souls, upon these children who had been in God's covenant from infancy, mean more than the expression of kindness; it was accompanied by prayer, and conveyed a Divine blessing—surely the transfer of the rite of Confirmation from

Judaism to Christianity. It was a precedent for His kingdom, and for parents to bring their children for admission in baptism, and the spiritual blessings obtained in Confirmation; and that they have rights there, which none may debar them from.

And the Church has woven this scene in her Lord's life into her Ritual, in the Baptismal office, saying, "Ye perceive how by His outward gesture and deed He declared His good will toward them. Doubt ye not, therefore, but earnestly believe that He will likewise favorably receive" (your children in Holy Baptism) "that He will embrace them in the arms of His mercy; that He will give unto them the blessings of eternal life, and make them partakers of His Everlasting Kingdom." Nor is this all; parents and sponsors are to look after the children, to see them taught, and take care that they be brought to the Bishop to be Confirmed by him—so soon as they are of sufficient age and instructed.

And St. Mark adds other words of our Lord, at that time, "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child he shall not enter therein;" that is, that adults must have the faith, meekness and docility—if they have not the innocence—of childhood, before they are fit for admission to His Kingdom.

Meanwhile a certain man came to Christ, and asked Him "what he should do to obtain eternal life?" He was young and wealthy, and we learn from the question, how Christ's doctrines were beginning to be understood; the eternal life meaning, a future eternal life with God in Heaven. He had felt the quickening power of the new and fuller revelations of the future life, that Christ's teaching had revealed, and desired to know how he might be made partaker of it.

And Christ asked him, "Why callest thou Me good?" He knew, that not faith, but curiosity had brought him to inquire; he did not recognise Him as God the Saviour, but only as a learned Rabbi; and so Christ said, "There is none good but

one, that is GOD." And because the man looked on Him only as a prophet, He answerd his question by referring him to the Law, to "Keep the commandments;" and he said he had done so from his youth. But Christ knew his self righteousness and want of faith, and said to him "one thing thou lackest; sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven." That world looked too far off, to make investments in; and he went away sorrowful, the beginning of a never ending sorrow. He had neither the faith, nor the character to make a good disciple; our Lord knew it, and He made him see it.

The disciples perceived that Christ meant, not only riches, but an inordinate desire for them, would hinder men's salvation; and they were amazed, and asked, "Who then can be saved?" The saying that "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven," was a proverbial expression for anything which seemed impossible; and the saying, "That all things are possible to God, was aimed at the doctrine of possibilites, common among the Academicians and philosophers, that "nothing is possible but what is true, or is going to be true,"—which is the doctrine of fate, all else is chance. No God can make riches help men into the Kingdom, and make them blessings to those who use them for His glory after they are in it.

Then answered Peter, and said unto Him, "Behold we have forsaken all, and followed Thee: what shall we have therefore?" It is remarkable, that every incident in our Lord's life, or in the persons named in the Gospel, tends to illustrate some dogma of His religion or Kingdom; and as often as St. Peter appears in the narrative and speaks or acts, some new characteristic of the man, or new truth flashes out. And no more genuine man, appears in the history of our race;—now bold and impetuous, now weak and cowardly; first an imperfect Christian,

afterwards a heroic saint and martyr. And he passed through all the phases, common in the life of all Christians, in rising from a state of sin and ignorance to one of righteousness and knowledge.

How perfectly natural and human was his question, "What shall we have, who have forsaken all?" There was un-Christian selfishness in it, which had no accord in anything he had heard from, or seen, in Christ. It manifested a calculating spirit, a hankering for loaves and fishes of power, a working for wages, rather than from faith and love; it was natural, in the childhood of his Christian life, and Christ did not rebuke his weakness, but encouraged him to forsake all for Him.

Peter's Christian life began in weakness, and continued so until after our Lord's resurrection; then came a great turning point, of new development of spiritual force, which made him one of the boldest of the Apostles in preaching and suffering for Christ; his selfishness was turned to self-denial and love, that patiently endured martyrdom for the Lord he thrice denied. This was the way Peter followed Christ, "in the regeneration."

And for him, and the other faithful Apostles, which excluded Judas, Christ promised them in the world's regeneration seats on twelve thrones; and the judgment, or condemnation of the posterity of the twelve tribes, who rejected Him. Regeneration is a wide reaching term and root: First, "a co-relative and opposite of original sin," lifting the regenerated to a spiritual life; Second, the raising of mankind, a fallen world out of that moral darkness in which Christ found it; and finally, by restoring Creation from the evils sin introduced into it, and making men immortal.

The work of the Baptist, and CHRIST and His Apostles, was the beginning of the Regeneration of the old kingdom of God from a carnal to a spiritual state, by which it was to work the world's regeneration; first translating Judaism into Christianity,

then translating Pagandom into Christendom; and at last, in the end of time, regenerating Creation by fire, and making it eternal.

After the Son of Man was glorified in Heaven, the Holy Ghost came to carry on the work of regeneration Christ began; and the Apostles received His Apostolic power, Matthias being numbered with the Eleven, and their thrones were raised in His Kingdom; through them His power has ever since been exercised, and now they occupy them in the Gospel and in His Kingdom. And now they are judges of the twelve tribes, scattered over the globe; and condemn their ancestors for unjustly condemning the Son of God, now on the throne of His glory in Heaven, yet ever present with His Church and ministry on earth.

Thus our Lord directly declared, that His power, as this Great High-Priest and Apostle sent from the Father, was to be given to the twelve. And while He in Heaven, would continue on the Throne of His glory as the one, only, everlasting Head, from whom, through the Holy Spirit, all the power of the ministry to regenerate men and the world would come; so when Matthias was chosen, the eleven prayed to Christ, in Heaven, and said, "Thou Lord Who knowest the hearts of all men show which of these two Thou hast chosen."

And He concluded with the gracious promise, that all who forsake all for Him, shall receive a hundred fold, with persecutions; "and all," was an answer to both the rich young man, and St. Peter's question: all such "shall inherit everlasting life."

But there are first who will be last, and last who will be first; it depends on the privileges we have, and the way we use them, who will be first and who last, in the Heavenly Kingdom. to whom much is given, of them, much will be required. And they will rank below others, who, with less help or blessings, used them for God's glory, and the world's benefit.

And then, as if to give the Apostles some further light

respecting St. Peter's question, He spake to them the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. The vineyard is God's kingdom on earth; the Church being, as it were, a Province of the Kingdom of God in Heaven; the laborers here, are working for its eternal wages, when the kingdom will be annexed to the Heavenly Empire.

And it represents all mankind as divided into two great classes—the laborers in the vineyard, and the idlers outside; and all admitted, who are ready and willing to work as soon as they are called. To serve God, to escape Hell, is the obedience of a slave: to serve for the reward of Heaven, is the act of an hireling; but to obey from love and gratitude to God, is what Christ inculcated, and makes us His true children.

This life is the working-time in His Kingdom, the life hereafter will be the paying time; God calls the laborers who will work, and He will reward them justly and liberally,—for He can do as He will with His own.

The work-day began at six o'clock, and the laborers were called early in the morning, and at the third, sixth, ninth and eleventh hours; a penny promised the first, the other's whatever was right. It looks as if these hours represented the stages of infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, and old age; infants called in holy baptism, the others at different stages,—idlers in the market, but going as soon as called.

The Penny is "the gift of God, eternal life," which He gives to whom He will, and refuses to none who work for it. The last called, were first paid; the aged, worked but one hour. When the first came they received a penny, but murmured; because others who had done less work had the same wages. And so they were last, in as much as they received less in proportion to their time and labor; yet they had no ground of complaint, being paid according to agreement.

So it warned the Apostles, that, "though they were first

called by Christ, they might be last in the Kingdom of Heaven," if they worked for Him from mercenary motives. And so, also, that those brought to the Kingdom in infancy, if they are not faithful in keeping their vows, may be less in the Heavenly Kingdom than those called later in life.

The eleventh hour laborers are not dying men, but idlers ready to go and work as soon as called; idle only, because uncalled. There were none called at the twelfth hour; it was too late, there was no time to work. And there is no hope held out to such a repentance in the Old Testament, or New; there must follow "a doing that which is lawful and right," which the dying have no time to do, and so no wages to receive.

Finally it concludes with the warning for all, "Many are called but few chosen;" all are called who hear of Christ and His Church; all are chosen who believe in Him, and are admitted into His Church. Those who have not the Law may be saved without the law, by the law written on the heart.





CHAPTER XXX.

THE FEAST OF DEDICATION.

A. D. 29, December. This Festival was instituted by Judas Maccabeus, to celebrate the cleansing of the Temple, six years after its defilement by Antiochus Epiphanes, B. C. 164. Like all the great Hebrew Festivals, it lasted until the octave; and our Lord's presence there evinced His patriotism, and sanction of the seasons designed to honor the Temple. The Eastern porch of the Temple was called Solomon's, because it was built of a part of the materials of his Temple. The excitement created by the teaching and miracles of Christ, the Apostles, and Seventy, had become universal throughout Palestine; multitudes followed Him, and the belief that He was the Christ continually increased. And it may well be supposed, that His appearance at this Festival was anxiously expected by the Rulers of the Jews, and looked forward to by Him, with deep interest,—because He knew it was the last time He would ever be present at it; as it was only about four months to the last Passover, when His earthly mission would end.

St. John alone mentions this visit, and his details are few; saying nothing of when our Lord first appeared in the Temple, nor how often He was there,—except inferentially, until the last day of the festival, when He taught in Solomon's Porch; and told

the Rulers plainly that He was Christ, and they accused Him of blasphemy and sought to stone him. Yet the discourse concerning the Sheepfold and the Shepherd was probably delivered in the Temple at that time, and as a public declaration of Himself as the Christ.

He told the Apostles, that He spake to the Rulers of the Jews in Parables, that seeing they might not see; and the Psalmist foretold that the Messiah would open His mouth in Parables, and utter things which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world. So it was testimony to them that they might see; and there was superhuman wisdom in the way He began His discourse, declaring His authority in a way that the Rulers could not but perceive His meaning, or fail to arouse their indignation. Christ's presence and teaching proved His Lordship of the Temple; there He stood and calmly rebuked those powerful enemies who were seeking His life, but were powerless to touch Him. Beginning with His solemn, "Verily, verily, I say unto you," asserting His right to teach the Levitical priesthood and Rulers of the Jews, who claimed to be God's only authorized teachers,—and calling His kingdom a sheep-fold, and Himself the door to enter it,—He accused them as thieves and robbers who climbed into it some other way. But His sheep know His voice and follow Him, and a stranger they will not follow.

This comparison of His Kingdom to a shepherd, and His disciples to sheep following their shepherd, were two usages familiar to the people of Palestine, when Christ was on earth; for the sheep-folds were built of stone, in the open country, with one low door, to be easily defended from wild beasts and robbers, and the sheep followed the Shepherd.

And to make His teaching more direct, and that there should be no misunderstanding of His words, He asserted with His "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep; all who came before Me, are thieves and robbers." He

is Himself the door to enter His Kingdom, not only for sheep but also for shepherds; if any enter in by Him, Jew or Gentile, they shall go in and out and find pasture,—that is security of salvation, and the peace of God that comes from citizenship in His Kingdom. They may live in the distractions of the world, but His grace will enable them to walk unharmed.

By thieves and robbers, He did not mean the prophets, but the false Christ's—like Judas of Galilee and Theudas; while there was an undertone of allusion to the Scribes and Pharisees, who had made the Temple a den of thieves, and robbed God of tithes and offerings.

Christ came down from Heaven, as the Son of God, and He returned to it as the Son of Man, taking up a human nature; and so, opening its door for all His disciples. The Apostles did not then understand what He meant, by calling Himself the Door; but when the Holy Ghost came He made them understand, that Christ was the second person of the God-head incarnate. And that, through the sacraments of the Church, men are regenerated and grafted into Him, and through the elements of bread and wine are made partakers of His body and blood; according to His saying, "he that eateth My body and drinketh My blood hath eternal life."

Neither the Pharisees nor disciples understood the Parable. He resumed His teaching, with His "Verily, verily, I say unto you," giving them a fuller declaration of the same truth, under a new figure that made His meaning more apparent. First, He represented Himself as the door of the sheep-fold; but now He is the Door of the sheep, by which they enter His Kingdom. The thief comes to kill and destroy souls; false teachers seek their own glory, and plunder the flock. He had come to give eternal life to all the dead; but to the sheep, more abundantly, the regenerate spiritual life to fit them for the Kingdom in Heaven.

As He goes on, the parable rises into higher prophetic revelations concerning His Divine origin, and earthly destiny. As the Good Shepherd, He has come to give His life for the sheep; hirelings—false teachers—will flee in danger, and the wolf—Satan—catcheth the sheep. He knows His sheep by His life in them, and the mark of His cross on them; and they know Him by the Peace of God wrought in them.

And as the Father knows Him, even so He knows the Father; which was saying, We are One. And He will lay down His life for the sheep, and take it again; and then the other sheep, the Gentile world, shall be gathered in—and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd, Christ the only Head—and in Him prophecy said, the Gentiles should trust. How this prophecy looks after nineteen centuries, with all Christendom built upon the foundation of the Gentile nations; and they, sending men, and spending millions to gather in the outlying Gentiles.

He said, the Father loved Him, because He had come to lay down His life for the sheep; but it was His voluntary act, “I have power to lay down My life, and power to take it again.” “This commandment I have received of My Father.” This discourse produced great reasoning among the Jews; some said, “He hath a devil;” and others defended Him, saying, “Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?” The devil blinds men; and the question was undeniable, that the devil never is the benefactor of any.

When Christ finished His discourse in the Temple, amid the Rulers and a vast concourse of people, some one approached Him, and earnestly asked, “How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be Christ, tell us plainly.”

He had told them many times, and in many ways, and that day He declared Himself in the Temple as the Door to the Kingdom of God, and the Good Shepherd who had come down from Heaven, and was there fulfilling the Prophecy of the

Psalmist, concerning Christ, who foretold Him as the Good Shepherd; and so He said to them, "I told you, and ye believe not; the works I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me."

Christ had prepared the way for the Jews to put the question, then and there, in the Temple of God, and before the people, that He might give that answer; and also make the most distinct declaration of His divine nature that He had ever made,—as if to leave them without excuse. First telling them they would neither hear nor believe, because they were not His sheep; He said, those who believe, "My Father giveth Me, and none is able to pluck them out of My Father's hands. I and my Father are One." Though they did not know, that His words were a full revelation of His Sonship in the glorious Godhead, and a claiming the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, that He was "Immanuel, God with us," they called it blasphemy and took up stones to stone Him. And what a natural scene followed, proving to them that His words were true; standing there calm and undismayed in that surging and excited throng of enemies, He declared that He had shown them many good works from His Father; and asked, "For which of these do ye stone Me?" He had drawn from them the confession, "Thou makest Thyself God;" and He proved His words true, by showing that they had no power to injure Him, because His claim was true, while they wished to stone Him for blasphemy.

In this defence, our Lord answered His accusers in the way their wickedness deserved; and that helped to confirm their blindness. He quoted from the Eighty-second Psalm, where men are called "the children of the Most High," and so it was no blasphemy to call Himself the Son of God; because He was sanctified and sent into the world by the Father, thus asserting, His Messianhip. And as Moses' miracles, to convince Pharaoh that God had sent him to deliver the Egyptians,

hardened his heart,—so also did our Lord's words and miracles, to convince the Rulers that He was the Christ, the Saviour of the world, harden their hearts.

They took up stones to cast at Him, but could not; He was defenceless, but they could not touch Him. The Romans had deprived the Jews of the right to execute criminals; but the mob might kill by stoning, without any trial, as was St. Stephen. So Christ's escape was a manifestation to the Jews, of His Divine power; and of their inability to take Him.

This lesson was for all time, because Christ knew that men would continue to reject Him, as the Jews did; because they could not understand, or believe how it is, that—being man, He could be God,—or because His revelation of Himself did not convince their minds of His Divinity.

For three years they had watched Him. He had challenged them to accuse Him of sin, untruth, or unrighteousness; and no one had done it. He had shown them that all the Messianic Prophecies were fulfilled in Him; and plainly declaring Himself one with God the Father, and proving it by their inability to injure Him, He departed from the Temple, never to appear there again, until He went up to present Himself as the Lamb of God,—ready to be sacrificed to take away the sins of the world, to give His last awful warning to the Jews, to declare their doom sealed, and the Temple desolate; because Salvation would no longer be attainable by its sacrifice, after His one great sacrifice had been offered. The going away from Jerusalem was according to the command He gave the Apostles; when they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another.





CHAPTER XXXI.

IN PEREA.

Christ and the disciples went from Jerusalem, to avoid the wrath of the Rulers of the Jews, into the solitude of the wilderness of Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John baptized and proclaimed Him the Lamb of God, and the Father acknowledged Him as His Son; doubtless also to rest and gather courage and strength for the Baptism of Blood, He knew He was soon to be baptized with, and many followed and believed in Him there.

But there was no place that He retired to, that the inimical Pharisees did not find out and pursue Him plotting to entrap, or tempt Him to say something, for which they could have Him arrested and brought before the Rulers. The transition which began with John's mission created intense religious excitement, not only as to Christ's Messiahship, but also as to what was to be the result of the doctrines and changes in religious worship that He announced; and the Pharisees watched mainly to disprove Christ's claim to the Messiahship; because the contest between the old faith and worship, or the visibleness of His Kingdom, was not apparent until after His resurrection and the Holy Ghost came.

How long Christ remained in Perea, or of His sayings and

doings there, but little is recorded; but the people testified, that all John said respecting Him was true. And the admission that John wrought no miracles showed Christ's superiority, and also that He did there some works.

The Pharisees watched Christ there seeking accusations, but as usual finding instruction; for He was becoming daily more bold in His teaching, and leaving them without excuse for misunderstanding or disbelieving in Him. And as He told them that the Kingdom of God was soon to appear, they asked when it would come? And He said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation."

They meant Messiah's Kingdom, which they supposed He falsely announced, as they saw no signs of it; yet His words implied that it was already in process of formation, but not coming in a way to be perceived with such observation and unbelief as theirs. He had before told them, it would grow like a mustard seed, and develop invisibly like leaven: "Neither shall they say, Lo, here! or lo, there! For behold the Kingdom of God is within you."

Our Lord here used the Kingdom of God as a synonym for regeneration, or a figure for the effect produced by being made a citizen of His Kingdom; because thereby His spiritual life, as Head of the Kingdom, is grafted on us. He had before taught a Chief Ruler, Nicodemus, that without regeneration, by water and the Holy Spirit, he could neither see nor enter the Kingdom; as long as any remain in unbelief it is now, as it was then, an inexplicable mystery.

If He had answered the question concerning the kingdom, so that the Pharisees could understand His full meaning, they would immediately have caused His arrest and crucifixion; and even the explanation to the Disciples was not understood by them until after His resurrection.

Not long after this, Christ delivered to His Disciples an-

other of those discourses concerning Himself, and the past and future history of this world ; which proves how clearly He foreknew all that was before Him, and that all things would go on as they had done to the world's end.

He told them He was going away from them, and the days would come, when they would long for such a day as they had enjoyed with Him as the Son of Man, "and ye shall not see it;" but He would come again. And meanwhile He forewarned them that false Christs would appear, but to give no heed to them; because at His next coming His glory would fill the heavens, as lightening which shines from one end to the other. But before that He must suffer many things, and be rejected by the Jews.

Then follows a double prophecy, of the destruction of the old Kingdom of Israel, and of the world. The first would be a type of the last; as it was in the days of Noah and Lot—when men were engrossed in the business and pleasures of life, and almost universal corruption reigned,—suddenly water and fire from God destroyed the old world and cities of the plain—so would come the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Temple, and the Daily Sacrifice, and the end of the kingdom, and the dispersion of the Jews among the nations. Then the Son of Man will be revealed, and His prophecies be fulfilled, and the end of that Dispensation, proving that the Son of Man is the Son of God. And this was, and is, a type of the state of society which will exist at the end of the world; and of the suddenness, and awful destruction, which will follow the appearing of the Son of Man, in the glory of God the Father. In the awful destruction of Jerusalem, as it will be in the end of the world, there will be no time to go down from the house-top to look after one's goods, nor to turn back from the field to secure them.

To remember Lot's wife, had become a proverb; and Christ used it to illustrate this saying of His, "No man having put his

hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God ;” entering His service we must be patient and enduring, under whatever persecutions and trials await us. The laborers in the field, and grinders at the mill, represent the only two classes into which mankind will be divided, when Christ comes to judgment—one, the righteous will be taken; the other, the unrighteous will be left—and the fire and brimstone of Sodom foreshadows their doom, whatever that may be in the life and world to come.

The disciples were puzzled by Christ’s words, and asked, “Where Lord [when or where], shall these things be?” His answer must have more perplexed them: “Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together;” but it foretold His coming to judgment on Jerusalem, and would have forever remained an enigma, but for the explanation He made when He repeated the prophecy on the Mount of Olives. The destruction of the world by deluge, and of Sodom by fire and brimstone, were types of the destruction of Jerusalem; and these presaged the more terrible scenes of the world’s conflagration, when He comes a second time, as the Son of Man, to judge it.

Then He spake the Parable of the Unjust Judge. His character is delineated with Divine brevity,—he neither feared God, nor regarded man,—which was worse than the devils; for they fear God, and tremble. He was unjust and reckless. It presents him in strong contrast with God’s mercy and compassion; and teaches that He always hears and answers prayers, though often He may seem to disregard them,—because of lack of faith, or opportunity in asking.

Here, a widow is the suppliant; because she is a type of desolation and helplessness, and so most likely to move the pity of the hard-hearted judge to redress her wrongs. But she came, time and again, and he would do nothing for her; until, at last, her persistency made him grant her petition.

This lesson was especially given to His disciples,—they must be importunate like the widow, watching and praying while suffering persecution, until God sends them relief. They saw that the hatred of the Pharisees was incessant and increasing; and Christ knew they wondered why He did not use the power they knew He had, to destroy them. By this example of the importunate woman, Christ taught that an answer to prayer depends on our perseverance; and delays increase patience and submission, as well as faith. These form in us a disposition like Christ's; and when this is accomplished, then the prayer will be answered,—not always as we expect, but in the way God knows will be best for us.

And beneath all this personal instruction, there was also another lesson respecting His Kingdom which His enemies were watching and plotting to hinder its coming; though now, God seems not to regard their hatred and importunity. He, also, would speedily be avenged. And He concluded with the question, “When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the Earth?” Either when He cometh to judge Jerusalem, or the world, will He find faith on Earth. This question He had answered,—as it was in the days of Noah and Lot, so will it be then. Then followed the Parable of the Pharisee and Publican.

Our world's literature has no more beautiful gems than our Lord's Parables; they are charming stories, teeming with instruction, on the profoundest mysteries of our present and future life, which none but God could reveal.

This Parable may describe an actual scene, witnessed by Christ in the Temple; and, whether it was spoken for the Pharisees, or His disciples, it was a lesson for all mankind on the duties of humility and charity, which He gave the world the only perfect example it has ever had,—the Pharisees conduct being in the extreme contrast to His, and to the temper and spirit of His religion.

These two men went to the Temple, at the same time, and for the same purpose, to pray and worship God; but the one was self-righteous, and the other righteous in God's sight. The Pharisee was in high esteem with the Rulers of his nation, the Publican was despised by them; one went to the inner court, near the altar; the other stood in the outer court among sinners, and their prayers differed with their characters.

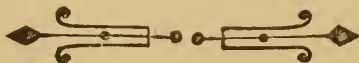
The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself, his address was to thank God; but it was not for what God had done for him, but for what he had made himself;—no extortioner, nor unjust, nor adulterer, a faster twice a week, and payer of tithes. All this, was only what the Law required; not satisfied with this self-gloryfying, he exalted himself by a disparaging comparison with other men, and scorn of the humble Publican in the outer court. He confessed no sins, asked for no mercy, and he lacked humility and charity; and his pride and self-righteousness were as great sins in God's sight, as those he boasted of exemption from.

How different the conduct and prayer of the Publican! As a Jew he was entitled to all the privileges of the Temple, but his humility led him to stand in the outer court; and his thoughts were not on his righteousness, nor the sins of others, but on his own sins; and with down-cast eyes, and deep humility, beating his breast, he begged mercy from God.

And He who is to be the world's judge, the Son of Man, said, "I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other;" justified in God's sight, and so pardoned for Christ's sake. And the Parable concludes with the warning so often repeated by our Lord, "That he who exalteth himself shall be abased, and he who humbleth himself shall be exalted;" pride is sure to bring humbling from God. Nothing but humility and repentance, a broken and contrite heart makes us acceptable to God, through Christ; and all comparison of ourselves with

others is forbidden, except to exalt them and depress ourselves.

St. Luke sums up his narrative of this visit of Christ to Perea, with the brief comment,—that many resorted to Him, and believed on Him there. Thus it appears that His Disciples were continually, silently increasing, without attracting observation; and He was preparing the foundations for the restored Kingdom of God, which was soon to be made visible. For, in fact, the Christian Church is but the development and completion of the Church into which Christ was admitted in infancy, and by Him was made more spiritual, by changing its ceremonial and sacrificial worship into the Sacramental and Spiritual worship of His Kingdom; and by His own act in transferring the Levitical to the Christian priesthood, and preparing for the new order of religious worship He was introducing.





CHAPTER XXXII.

GOING INTO JUDEA.

Christ and the disciples went from Perea towards the Jordan, crossing it near Jericho; and the Apostles were troubled, because they supposed He was going to Jerusalem, as they knew the wrath of the Rulers, and that they had resolved to kill Him. And they were afraid,—they feared that they, too, would be murdered; because they were His disciples, and had taught and wrought miracles by His authority. Though Christ did not intend to visit Jerusalem until the Passover—when He would deliver Himself to the Rulers, and finish His earthly mission—yet this incident remarkably confirms the truth of the whole narrative.

Christ took the Apostles aside, and told them privately, “The Son of Man shall be delivered unto the Chief Priests, and unto the Scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles.” And this is another proof of His foreknowledge, that, though the Jews would condemn Him for blasphemy, He would not be stoned according to their Law, but they would deliver Him to the Gentiles to be scourged and crucified; and the third day He would rise again,—that being essential to fulfill the prophecy, “Not a bone of Him shall be broken.” And the conquest of Palestine by the Romans, was

one of the preparations for the incarnation of the Son of God, and for the fulfillment of that prophecy.

Jesus went before, the people following Him, as the Good Shepherd. And there was no longer need to conceal from them His approaching death, which would be the final act for introducing His kingdom. The Passover—on which He was to be crucified—was near; and His words and deeds were not only to convince His Apostles, but all future generations, that He knew all that was before Him, and that all the events leading to His death were controlled by Him; and that He had power over His life, to lay it down and take it again, and man could not take it until He was ready to offer it.

And it was proof to the Disciples and Jews, as it has ever since been to the world, that He is the Christ; Elijah and Paul raised the dead, but no other man but Jesus Christ ever raised himself from the dead. The Apostles understood that He would soon go to deliver Himself to the Jews; and then occurred another incidental insight into our common humanity, which confirms the reality of the characters of the men, and the truth of the narrative. If He were about to leave, and His Kingdom to come, then there must be Chief-Rulers for it; and not Peter, but James and John ask, that they may sit on His right and left hand in His glory,—referring to His recent promise, that the Apostles should sit on twelve thrones in His Kingdom.

But Christ answered them, saying; “Ye know not what ye ask;” they had witnessed His glory at His transfiguration on the Mount; but they did not know what His Kingdom, or His glory, meant then. And He asked them, if they could “drink of His cup, and be baptized with His baptism?” Surely not understanding Him, they said, “We are able.” And Christ foretold their martyrdom, “Ye shall indeed drink of My cup and be baptized with My baptism;” and they were. James was the first, who suffered for Christ; and so was, in one sense, on His

right hand; and John was the last Apostle, and so was on the left.

But the request looked forward to Christ's Kingdom in Heaven, in glory, as they called it; and He said, "that is not Mine to give," not now; or else it is reserved by the Father, and we shall never know the full import of His words, until Christ comes again in His glory to take His Church on earth and in Paradise, to annex them to the Kingdom of God in the glory of the Father in Heaven.

When the other Apostles heard of the request, they were indignant; not probably at the ambition of the two so much, but at their device to get the best places in the Kingdom. And He used the incident, to give them a lesson on the duties of humility and self-denial; and pointed them to His own example, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and give His life a ransom for many;" and they must follow Him. And He said, it shall not be with you as among the Gentiles, where Rulers exercise their authority with pride and arrogance; but they must be as servants. Which shows how vastly superior His principles were to all other men's, and to what this world's subjects long and strive for,—therefore He was superhuman; because His was the greatness of God, and reversed all the ways of man and of this world.

And they came to Jericho, followed by a multitude, and remained some days there; but as they resumed their journey, going out of the village, a blind-man, named Bartimeus, sat by the way-side begging. St. Matthew says there were two blind-men; and St. Mark called one of them by name, whom he probably knew,—and he cried out, when he heard Christ was passing by, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

This was a profession of faith in Him as the Messiah; but the people told him to hold his peace. But he cried out the more, "Thou, Son of David have mercy on me." And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be brought; and the people told

him to be of good comfort, for He calleth thee. When he came Christ asked him, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" and he said, "Lord, that I might receive my sight?" And He said to him, "Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole;" and immediately he received his sight, and followed Christ.

And it is true now, that nothing else so enlightens the mind, and enlarges spiritual vision, and the knowledge and love of God, as faith in Christ,—as the incarnate Son of God, the Son of Man crucified for our sins, resurrected for our justification, glorified in Heaven, as the assurance that He has opened the way there for all believers; and so we can believe, that it was for that man's faith, Christ restored his sight. And there is no earthly romance so captivating as this heavenly truth; nothing which inspires such love and trust in Christ, as God, and so raises the mind above the pride, and pomp, the ambition and charms of this world.

Christ's popularity had now so increased, that the multitude following Him, was more like the triumphal procession honoring a king, or conquerer, returning from some successful war, than that of Jesus of Nazareth on His way to Jerusalem to be condemned and crucified by His enemies. He was now at some point between Jericho and Bethany, where He tarried with His Disciples; knowing what was soon to happen, and give rise to the mightiest miracle ever wrought by any prophet, or by Himself to that time, and which He knew would be the means of hastening His death.

They had not gone far from Jericho, when a rich publican, named Zaccheus, hearing that the procession was coming near his house, and anxious to see Christ, climbed into a sycamore tree on the road-side; because he was of small stature, and the multitude thronged around Christ.

What a lively picture this presents of that scene; how natural and probable the incident. And when Christ saw him, He

called him, and said He would dine with him that day. It was doubtless joyful news to him; in his humility, he desired only to look on the wonderful Man whom he was ready to believe in and love. Christ knew his mind; he was a good publican, rich, but made his money honestly. He was not afraid of Christ's scrutiny of His conduct and conscience. But, when Christ's enemies saw that He was going to be Zaccheus' guest, they all murmured at Him.

They murmured, because He had gone to be the guest of a Publican, whom they said was a sinner; if he had been a sinner, he was then in a state of mind that attracted our Lord's attention, and was such a one as He had come to save. He did not tell him to sell all he had; he was ready to give half of his goods to the poor, and restore four-fold, if he had taken anything by false accusation. This was the severest penalty imposed by the Law; and as our Lord saw he was a true Israelite, He said to him, "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham," he believed in Him as the Christ. Not asserting that Zaccheus belonged at first to the lost, He only justified Himself for going among Publicans and sinners; for those, He had come to save.

And it is these little notices of those common impulses of our human nature, and common humanity, so universal now—like those mentioned respecting Zaccheus—which show that the Evangelist described a real scene, and assure us of the truth of the Gospel; for it does not lie within the power of any human mind, to depict scenes like these with such details and fitness, and descriptions of a time in which they did not live. There is an infinite distance between this and any fiction ever written.

The next glimpse of Christ, after leaving Zaccheus' house, shows Him not far from Jerusalem; and at some pause on the journey, He spake the parable of the nobleman who went into a far country; because His disciples supposed He was going to

Jerusalem to immediately proclaim His Kingdom. And it was reasonable they should so expect, because He had recently said so much concerning His Kingdom's coming; and they were anxious for it, because they expected to share in its honor and power, and occupy the twelve thrones He had promised them. And He spake the Parable, to remove their false ideas.

The Parable is similar to that of the Talents; only that was general, and this was particular for the Apostles, and adapted to the circumstances under which it was spoken,—to repress their impatience respecting His Kingdom's coming, and to teach them that they must wait His time, and work faithfully during His absence, and render an account of their stewardship to Him, when He returned; while it also warned His enemies of the penalty awaiting them, for rejecting Him.

The nobleman is Christ,—noble by His earthly descent from Abraham; royal, by David's line; and king of kings, as the Son of God come into the far country of this world to receive a kingdom, and inaugurate it by His death and resurrection, and then to return and receive it, and reckon with the Rulers to whom He entrusted it.

The ten servants represent the number usually attendant on noblemen; and so, Christ's ministers. They have their several trusts, and were to occupy His Kingdom themselves, and by their successors, until He returns. But the citizens, a cautious representation of His enemies who were seeking His life, as well as all who would reject Him, He will have slain before Him.

Thus the reckoning was transferred to the end of the world, and to His second coming to judge it; and this showed the Apostles their erroneous expectations respecting the real nature of His Kingdom. The rewards are regal—authority over cities, and proportioned to their fidelity; and he who hid his one pound, will have it taken from him and given to him who had

used his ten pounds faithfully. He gave as a reason for not using his pound, that he knew his Lord was a hard Master; which was a reason why he should have done his best with it—and so the king condemned him, out of his own mouth, as a wicked servant.

Christ remained at the place where He spake the Parable of the nobleman's going to receive a Kingdom, until a messenger brought Him word of Lazarus' sickness; nothing is said of his sickness, nor how long it had been. He knew what would follow from Lazarus' death, and said it would be for "the glory of God, and that the Son of God might be glorified thereby;" and He and the Disciples crossed the Jordan.

Two days after, hearing of Lazarus' sickness, Christ said to His Disciples, "Let us go again into Judea?" And they remonstrated again, because "the Jews of late sought to stone Thee." He had waited, that Lazarus might be three days dead, before He awoke him; and so be a type of His own three days in the tomb. And He said, in answer to their objection to His going into Judea, "there are twelve hours in a day, in which a man walking doth not stumble." The light was a mysterious reference to Himself as the light of the world, and the day to the time of His being on earth. There was no danger for His personal safety; the stumbling in the night, would be in the darkness to follow His disappearing from the world.

Then He said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go to awake him out of sleep." The Apostles probably thought that sleep was a favorable symptom; but Christ told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead." And He was glad for their sakes that He was not there, but He was going to awake him; thus He began to reveal the doctrine of the resurrection of all mankind. And ever after, sleep was a symbol of death with the Apostles; they called it "sleeping in Jesus," and burial grounds were cemeteries, or sleeping places.

When Christ said to the Apostles, "Let us go unto Lazarus," Thomas said to the other Apostles, "Let us go also, that we may die with Him;" which shows that they knew Christ's deep and tender love for this earthly friend, a manifestation of the Divine love which brought Him from Heaven to take our nature, and die in it for our sins. Thomas appears only three times conspicuously in the Gospel, but always the same man—incredulous, reluctant to believe only on sufficient evidence, capable of strong impulses and attachments, and one of the best witnesses for Christ's Divinity and resurrection.

Christ was glad, for their sakes, that He was not present while Lazarus was sick; because He would have been asked to restore him, and He would not have had occasion to work the mightier miracle of raising him from death, "to the intent ye may believe," and so to increase their faith. When He came to Bethany, Lazarus had been already four days in the grave; and many friends were present, to comfort the sisters concerning their brother.

When Martha heard that Christ was coming, she went out to meet Him; and expressed her faith in Him, saying, "If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." "Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again;" and Martha said, she knew it—at the resurrection. And from this remark it is seen how Christ's doctrine of a final resurrection of the dead was known among the common people; and this confession of her faith, caused a new revelation of the doctrine. He said, "I am the Resurrection and the life: and he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;" and this He was about to prove by raising Lazarus—now, at least, four days dead; and He demanded from her if she believed Him? And she said, "Yea Lord; I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, who should come into the world."

Saying this, she went immediately to call her sister Mary, saying, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee;" and she arose quickly, and went to Him.

Those consoling words of God, our Saviour, to His sorrowing disciple, are incorporated into the Burial Office of His Church, and embodied in her Creed; and are the first words mourners now hear, as they begin to perform the last sad offices of love in the burial of their dead. And there was a depth of meaning in the words, which Christ, the Lord of Life, then only knew: that death does not touch man's immortal spiritual life. The death of the animal soul releases his spirit from its union with the body; and though that be dead, he is alive with increased knowledge and capacity to know the mysteries of God, and a higher life. And the promise He made to believers, that that life shall never die, looked onward to the second death—which is suffering with no last gasp and pang to end it.

Here were two purposes accomplished: first, the faith of the woman expressed in Him as the Christ; second, her knowledge of the resurrection—and this, before she had witnessed the mighty miracle of raising to life her brother, so long dead. The world could not well spare this testimony, from a woman who had seen Him often, at intervals, during three years, in the unguarded intercourse, where He was a guest in her father's house. Then she hurried with her sister Mary to where Christ was; and many friends, who had come to comfort them, followed—supposing they were going to Lazarus' grave to weep—and so were present as witnesses of his resurrection. The burial place was near Bethany, where Mary met Him; and she fell down at His feet, and expressed her faith in Him, in the same words of Martha, "If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

Jesus was troubled at the sorrow and tears of these friends. His human sympathy was moved to its depths; and He asked, "Where have ye laid him?" "They say, come and see." And

as He stood by the grave of the man He had loved, "He wept;" showing His human nature, as the Son of Man—in sweet contrast with the exercise of Divine power He was going to use, as the Son of God. The only instances of Christ's weeping, are at the grave of Lazarus, and when He foretold the destruction that would come on Jerusalem.

The earth is called a vale of tears; the world is full of mourners; all the saints are represented as shedding tears. Jesus wept here, but in the kingdom above He will wipe away all tears. And the assurance we have of it is, that on this occasion He showed Himself able to do so, turning their mourning and weeping into joy and rejoicing.

The Jews saw and spoke of Christ's tender love—and here comes out another fact of their belief in Christ's divine power: could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, have saved this man's life? That is an incidental proof, that He wrought that miracle recently at Jericho; and in this way the Gospels pile mite after mite of testimony to our Lord's Divinity, until it becomes a mountain, as unshakable and enduring as the existence of the eternal God.

Lazarus was buried in a cave, and a stone lay upon it. And Christ, groaning in Himself, came to the grave; and He said, "Take away the stone;" and Martha remonstrated, saying he had been dead four days, and decomposition must have begun. She supposed the staying of corruption was a work beyond His power; and He said to her, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?" He had told the Apostles, when the news of Lazarus' sickness was brought to Him, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." He foresaw that His own death and glorification in the Godhead would be the result of Lazarus' resurrection.

The stone was removed from the tomb where Lazarus was

laid, and "Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said: Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me, and I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people who stand by, I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me." Then He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth; and he who was dead came forth, bound hand and foot," and his grave clothes about him; and Christ said, "Loose him and let Him go." And one marvel of the miracle was, that, though he was thus bound, he stood erect in their midst.

There can be no doubt but that decay had begun in Lazarus, in that latitude; for, in a similar one, I have known it needful to say the burial service over a young person, who, twelve hours before, possessed her senses and speech. What Lazarus saw in that interval, and where his spirit was—while his soul was dead, and his body in the tomb—are hidden from us, until we solve the mystery by our own experience. But many Jews believed in Christ because of this miracle, and reported it to the Pharisees; and, it was the direct cause of Christ's crucifixion.

The miracle has been questioned, because only St. John recorded it; but the reason is apparent: The other Evangelists wrote while Simon and his children were alive, and to have related it then might have led to their murder by the Jews; but when St. John wrote they were probably dead, and there was no need of withholding names and details,—while there must have been many alive, who would have denied it were it not true.

All the particulars have the impress of truth, and are so natural that it is hardly possible they could have been imagined, unless they were real. No writer of fiction has ever invented a story so plausible, and which so carries with it the conviction of its truth. And then it is confirmed by the fact, that the Pharisees called a Council to consider the expediency of killing Christ, because, "If we let Him alone, all will believe on Him; and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation."



CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CHIEF PRIESTS' COUNCIL.

When the report of Lazarus' resurrection reached the Chief Priests and Pharisees, they called a Council to decide what should be done because of Christ's popularity; and they feared the people would make Him a king, and create a revolution that would cause the loss of their authority.

Meanwhile, Christ went from Bethany into the region beyond Jericho—the wild and mountainous wilderness of Ephraim—to avoid His arrest, until He was ready to deliver Himself to His enemies.

No record is preserved of what our Lord said or did, in that retreat. He went there for repose, and preparation for the trying scenes before Him on Passion Week; all was personal for Him, and it was too sacred to be blazoned to the world. Removed from His enemies, He doubtless passed His time in prayer and gathering strength for His last conflict with Satan and death; and giving His Apostles instruction how to continue the mighty work He was about to commit to them, of carrying the glad tidings of His Gospel and Church into all the world.

Meanwhile, that Council of the Jews was making history and themselves unimpeachable witnesses that Christ did suffer. They first decided, "If we let this Man alone, all men will be-

lieve on Him; and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation." And this will be seen to be an important fact, when Christ is brought to trial before Pilate.

Then Caiaphas said to the Council, "Ye know nothing at all nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." This he spake as prophecy; but, in his judicial blindness, did not know the import of his words, and that Christ's death would finally cause what he proposed to kill Him to avoid. And the history of that Council is unimpeachable testimony for the Gospel narrative; because it reveals that the very men named there, and the characters they bore, were historical. There were then two High Priests, Annas and Caiaphas; the former had been deposed five years before by the Romans, but the Jews regarded him as the lawful one. Yet God appears to have recognized Caiaphas, and gave him the spirit of prophecy; and made both of them witnesses for Christ's Divine character and mission as the Messiah, who was to die not only for that nation, but to gather together God's children in the Gentile world. But the ground on which he advocated Christ's death was political, unscrupulous, and unjust; and proves true what He said of the Rulers of the Jews.

God did not withdraw the gift of prophecy from His people, until they had filled up the measure of their iniquity, by doing what they had prepared themselves for, by crucifying His Son; and while Caiaphas told the Council they knew nothing at all about this expediency of one Man's dying for them and the nations, he probably knew as little of the real import of his words; and, that they were but the renewal of an older prophecy of the Messiah's death. But he and Pontius Pilate are the world's two great witnesses, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Son of God; because they jointly caused His crucifixion.

And now we look back over the world's history, and see that the prophecy of this unjust man proved true—that Christ is the Saviour of the world, the one Man who should die for the people; and that his fear, that the Romans would come to take away their place and nation, which he was plotting to prevent, actually took place before that whole generation was dead—because they crucified Christ. Such is the example which history gives of God's retribution for the unjust condemnation of His eternal Son.

From the day of that Council, the Pharisees sought Christ's death; and they published a commandment requiring any man who knew where He was, to make it known to them. And it was probably their intention to have Him privately assassinated without any legal forms. But God's will, and the fulfillment of prophecy and the world's salvation, and the testimony for Christ, required a public judicial trial to end His life; so that He should not only die at the hour the Paschal lamb was killed, but also have the testimony of the Sanhedrim, and of the Roman Governor, that He was crucified because He claimed to be the Son of God, and the king of the Jews.

THE JEWISH PASSOVER.

For fifteen centuries the Jews had annually celebrated the Passover, to commemorate their ancestors miraculous deliverance from bondage, in Egypt; and as a type and preparation for the coming of the Son of God, to deliver mankind from bondage to Satan and death. The sprinkling of blood on the door posts of the Israelites—which saved them from the destroying angel—was typical of God's mercy in passing over and sparing all who are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, in His new covenant of holy baptism.

The week preceding the Passover was kept as a time of purification, in acts of humiliation and repentance. The Law

required certain rites in the Temple, and all pious Jews went up to Jerusalem for that purpose; and it was the root of the Lenten Season, grafted on it by our Lord's example, and that has ever since been observed by His Church. The time for the last legal celebration had come; and Christ, the Lamb of God—who was, by the one sacrifice of Himself, to make a perfect satisfaction for the sins of the whole world—was on His way, going up to present Himself as ready to be offered.

And six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, to Simon's house, where He was wont to abide when near Jerusalem; and where Lazarus was, whom He had raised from the dead. And it is a wonderful confirmation that the miracle was wrought there, that now—after nineteen centuries—the modern Arab name of the village of Bethany, means Lazarus; and so the earth, with its Jerusalem, and Bethany, Gethsemane, and Calvary, and angels, and devils, and men, and His Own Miracles, and God the Father's voice, and the Gospel and Church, and Christendom, all unite their testimony to assure us that Jesus was the Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, and the world's great Saviour.

The sixth day before the Passover was the original seventh day, on which God rested after He finished the work of Creation; and is the first day, and Sunday, of the Christian week. When the Israelites came out of Egypt, that night God instituted the Passover, and put back the original Sabbath one day, to our Saturday; and that was the Hebrew Sabbath for fifteen centuries, kept as a memorial of Creation, and of God's merciful deliverance of their ancestors from Egyptian bondage. And on that original Sabbath Christ rose from the dead, and restored it, as the Lord's day, to its original seventh day; to forever commemorate God's works of Creation, the deliverance of His people from Egyptian bondage, and His own resurrection, and man's redemption from bondage to Satan, sin, and death. And Sunday

has, ever since, been kept as the day of rest for man, and for the worship of God by His Church and Christendom; and as the Gentiles observed a festival called Sunday, in honor of the Sun, it was a help to bring them to Christian worship. And that has, ever since, been one of the names of the Lord's day.

It was a Jewish custom to make a festive supper five days before the Paschal lamb was taken to the Temple, to be shut up, as devoted to God, until it was sacrificed. This feast Simon, the leper, made; and Lazarus was with Christ at the table. And there Mary poured the ointment on His head, and anointed His feet, and wiped them with her hair; and but for Judas' complaint—that it might have been sold for much and given to the poor—it might not have been known that it was for His burial. It is strange that this Mary and her act should have been confounded with that of Mary Magdalene, which occurred two years before in the house of Simon, a Pharisee; for there is nothing in common with the women, except their names, and that both acts were in the house of a man named Simon. One, was a sinner living at Magdala; the other, had chosen the good part, and lived at Bethany.

At that feast reclined Judas, a thief and reprobate, who was to betray and prepare the way for his Lord's crucifixion; and, also, to forever be the chief and most reliable witness the world has for His divinity. In reply to Judas' complaint, Jesus said, "She hath done this against the day of My burial;" which tells how perfectly He knew what was before Him; and that all the preparations for His death were proceeding according to His will and direction.

Prophecy foretold that there would be one traitor Apostle, who would forfeit his Bishopric; and Christ needed this betrayer, who had known Him in private and public, and seen His holy life, heard His pure doctrines, been present at His mighty miracles, to be an unimpeachable witness to His innocence, and

perfect the testimony concerning Him, as Judas afterwards did. And so Christ said to Judas, "Let her alone; the poor ye have with you always, and whensoever ye will may do them good; but Me, ye have not always." And, in saying she had done it for His burial, He swept away the disciples false expectations of a temporal kingdom; for what could He, who was about to die, do for their earthly glory, as they saw no signs of a kingdom. It was a timely warning to Judas, to awaken him to a sense of the enormous crime he was soon to commit.

Then Christ said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her." This was a prophecy none but God could have foreseen and foretold; it was not even likely to be fulfilled. But His words consecrated it for perpetual transmission; and now, after all these centuries, they are part of His Church's Gospel for the Monday before Easter, and are read twice every year in the Lessons in every branch of the Anglican Church; and so over all the world—for the sun never sets on her worship, and they have been translated into five hundred dialects of human language, and have been sent wherever man has wandered. So His words prove His Divine foreknowledge; and besides that, the world is filled with the blessings of His death, as that house was with the sweet odor with which He was anointed for it.





CHAPTER XXXIV.

CHRIST'S ENTRY TO JERUSALEM.

It is estimated that three millions of people had assembled in and around Jerusalem, having come to the Passover, there being a general expectation that something extraordinary was to occur; though none but Christ knew that it would be the last legal festival celebrated, and that He was the Lamb of God who was to end the sacrifices.

Christ and the Apostles had rested at Bethany—on the last legal Jewish Sabbath—where many people had come to see Him and Lazarus; and on Sunday morning He went up towards Jerusalem, followed by a multitude going to the daily sacrifice.

It was through faith in Him that all sacrifice had been effectual for salvation; the Church of God never had but one Lord, one faith, and one sacrifice. Before creation Christ loved the Church, for it was a development from the kingdom in Heaven; and Christ gave Himself for it, for all who lived before Him, as well as all since.

This day His popularity reached its climax, and the scenes on His ascent to the city, and in the Temple, caused the wrath of the Rulers to increase, until it exhausted itself in reviling Him as He was expiring on the cross. The procession from Bethany attracted multitudes, and when it reached Bethphage,

Christ sent two disciples to bring Him an ass and her colt; and if the owners objected, to say, "The Lord hath need of them;" and everything happened as He foretold. The mother animal symbolized Judaism passing away with old age; and the colt was a type of Christianity, with its larger freedom and universal adaptation to mankind.

It was no triumph of ambition or pride, and no desire for self-glory, that influenced Christ. The disciples brought the colt, put their garments on him, and placed Christ thereon; kings and prophets anciently rode on asses, and Solomon so entered Jerusalem, a thousand years before, going to his coronation, as a type of Christ's now triumphal entry. And though He was going to the Temple to take possession of it, as its Lord; and to be recognized by the Father's voice from Heaven, as His Son; and to fulfill a prophecy; and the scene had all the signs of royalty; yet, He went humbly and sorrowfully, knowing what the end would be.

As He approached the city, the people and the enthusiasm increased; and they threw branches of palms, and strewed their garments in the way—the palms, emblems of victory—and the garments, as if the earth were not good enough for Him to ride on. And the disciples, enraptured by the honor to Christ, began to praise the Lord, in the Psalm in which this scene had been predicted, a thousand years before, and in which the angels announced His incarnation and birth.

"Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosannah in the Highest; peace in Heaven and glory in the Highest." And He moved on amid the surging and tumultuous stream of living beings which went before and followed after, like a river of life, until He reached the angle of the road that hid the Temple from His view; and, coming in sight of its magnificent and dazzling pinnacles and walls, He paused for a moment; and, conscious of the judgment the Rulers would bring

on themselves, their Temple, and city, He wept;—for He knew that, after five days more other voices would cry, “Away with Him! crucify Him!”

Jesus had wept, a few weeks before, at Lazarus’ grave; but now He wept for the blindness and unbelief of the Rulers of the nation, dead in trespasses and sins, from which there would be no resurrection. He wept in love and sorrow, because they were sinning away their last days of grace; and He knew no rebukes of His, nor His own death, would bring them to repentance, nor avert God’s judgments that were coming on the place and people.

And there He foretold their destruction, which was in strange contrast with the whole scene, and the Hosannas that had not yet ceased filling the air; saying that they might have known what belonged to their peace, but now it was hid from them; and the days were coming when their enemies would compass them and their children on every side, and level Jerusalem with the ground, and not leave one stone on another, because they knew not the time of their visitation.

He had already foretold to His disciples, that Jerusalem would be destroyed for rejecting Him; but now He includes the Temple and inhabitants; because they would not know the things which belonged to their peace, nor His visitation—therefore, their day of probation was ending. And He described their destruction with all the particularity of one who had witnessed the event, and it is confirmed by Josephus who did witness it; salvation was then hidden from the eyes of the Rulers.

But the days will come—they were forty years off—when the enemies will compass the city and Temple, and lay them and the inhabitants within them level with the ground. And this was literally fulfilled by the Romans, though Titus tried to save the Temple; yet the obstinacy of the Jews so enraged the soldiers, that he could not refrain them from destroying it, and they

crucified many besides those killed by the sword, and an hundred thousand people perished. And no wonder Christ wept, as He foresaw that terrible scene. And this prophecy is better proof of His divinity than all His miracles, historically considered, because if there were possibility of deception in them, there is none in this; for Jerusalem is now a monument of that foretelling, built out of, and over the massive ruins of the old city and Temple.

The vast throng paused while Christ wept, and made His lament over the City of Zion, endeared to Him by so many associations with the people of God; where the Temple had preserved His worship, and the priesthood had guarded and transmitted His revelation for so many centuries, while the whole Gentile world was sunk in idolatry.

Again the great river of human beings, which had come from Bethany, now moved on towards the city, met another stream pouring out to swell its volume, and their meeting renewed the enthusiasm; and the multitude that went before, and that followed after, united in shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the Highest."

When He reached the city all Jerusalem was moved, and the tumult increased, and a murmur of disapprobation was expressed in the cry,

"WHO IS THIS?"

This Son of David; this Man, coming in the name of the Lord; this Man, to whom is applied, "The King of Glory." And this has ever since been the great central question in Theology, the momentous one which has been asking for almost two thousand years, and never more anxiously than now—and which each one must answer for himself, if he will be saved by Him—Who is Jesus Christ? What is He to me? And what an I to Him?

While the people were hailing Christ as the King of Glory,

He passed into the Temple, and declared Himself its Lord; and a second time cleansed it, driving out the sellers of merchandise from its outer courts, and said unto them, "It is written My House shall be called the House of Prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." This exercise of Christ's Divine power, and the quailing of the intruders, increased the excitement of the people; and entering the Temple, the lame and the blind came to Him and He healed them—and that caused a renewal of the acclamations, and the children catch the inspiration and rapturously joined in the Hosanna's to the Son of David. And when the Chief Priests and Rulers saw the wonderful things, and heard the children shout, they were sore displeased; and said to Christ, "Hearest Thou what these say?"

"And He said unto them, Yea; have ye never read, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, Thou hast perfected praise?" "If these should hold their tongues, the stones would immediately cry out."

In quoting these words of the Psalmist, our Lord admitted that He both heard and understood the meaning of the children's praise; that they were fulfilling the prophecy which proclaimed Him the Lord, whose glory is above the Heavens, and whose praises had provoked their enmity. And He left it for them to remember the rest of the sentence, "that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." And these enemies were evidently abashed and confused by this reference to the prophecy; for though they were enraged by their impotence to check the enthusiasm of the people, and had given orders to arrest Him, He remained undisturbed for the remainder of the day. And the Pharisees said among themselves, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after Him." Thus Christ went on accumulating testimony for His Messiahship, in ways that no genius of man could have invented, and nothing but the wisdom of God could have executed. The Scribes and Chief

Priests sought then to destroy Him; but they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His doctrine and miracles.

Certain Greeks present said to Philip, "Sir, we would see Jesus;" and he told Andrew, and they told Christ; but He did not notice their request—probably because the time drew near for the special act He had come to do, at the evening sacrifice. For He said, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified; it was the hour when the Pascal Lamb was taken to the Temple, to be shut up until it was taken out to be sacrificed. And then Christ offered Himself to the Father, ready and willing to fulfill the type.

And He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a seed of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit;" and thus He symbolized His own death and burial, as the Seed of the Woman, and foretold its result. And nothing is more appropriate than the vitality and productiveness of seeds; because wheat from the pyramids in Egypt has grown in our day, and one grain has produced two thousand ears. It has been sprouted on ice, is man's best food, and grows where he attains the highest development.

When Christ had made the great promise to His disciples that he who hated his life should save it eternally, and whoever will follow Him, and be His servant, he shall be where He is, and His Father will honor him; then He made the offering of His own soul to the Father, saying, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." And His voice sounded out from Heaven, and filled the Temple, so that the people said it thundered; or that an angel spake to Him, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

This offering of Himself as the Lamb of God, and the shrinking from it as the Son of Man, manifested His two natures

and showed that He was preparing and prepared to die; and the Father's promise of more glory banished His fear of death then. And He did glorify Him in His resurrection and ascension to Heaven, and by the enthronement of His sacred humanity in the Godhead; and by a name, and fame, and blessings on mankind that none but God could give.

Christ said to the people, the voice came not for His sake, but for theirs, that they might believe in Him; and that He would, by His death, bruise Satan's head, who had brought death into this world, and at last bring him—and all whom He had caused to sin—to judgment, and put an end to his power to do evil, and forever shut him up in Hell.

From all we know of the moral darkness of the Gentile world before Christ came, and from its best estate as we learn from the classical writers of the Golden Age of Roman literature, it looks as if the whole world was under the devil's power; and nothing more diabolical can be imagined than the condition of society. And from the day of Christ's death, and its redemption from Satan's almost unrestrained control, the power of Christ has been gaining the ascendancy. The devil was about to make his final assault on Christ; but it will be in vain. He will judge and condemn the world as it is, will cast Satan out of his dominion over it which he has so long enjoyed. And then He said to the disciples, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

After giving expression to His own deep emotion, He directs the remainder of His discourse chiefly to the Hellenists—for they, as well as the Jews, knew that lifting up signified crucifixion; and by that, which puzzled both parties, they could not understand how He could draw all mankind—Jews and Gentiles—unto Him.

And so the people answered Him, that the Law said Christ will abide forever; and how sayest Thou, the Son of Man must

be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? It was equivalent to saying, We were thinking that you are Christ; You say You are about to die; what, then, becomes of the kingdom? Their unbelief was working. What kind of a Messiah is this, Who is to be crucified and leave no kingdom?

To these questions our Lord made no direct answer, but continued His discourse to the Greeks; speaking of Himself as the Light, and so identifying Himself with the prophecy of Simeon, as "the Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of my people Israel." And He declared to them that the Light would be only a little while with them, and to walk in it, or after Him, before darkness came upon them; and then they would be children of the Light—or His true disciples.

That day many Chief Rulers believed in Christ, but were afraid to confess it; and though He had done so many miracles, His enemies would not believe—and they fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy, blinding their own eyes, and hardening their hearts; they had cut themselves off from the mercy of God, and made themselves reprobates.

As the time for leaving the Temple drew near, Jesus cried, "He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me but on Him Who sent Me;" and that there should be no doubt as to this testimony He spake concerning Himself, He said, "He that seeth Me, seeth Him Who sent Me. I come as a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness." The people had heard the Father's voice, and they could hardly fail to perceive that He claimed to be one with the Father, and the Christ who was to lighten the world; and if they would not believe, He said He would not judge them now, because He had come to save men; but, as the Son of Man, He would one day judge the world.

These warnings He continued for two days more, anxious to help His enemies to believe and repent; that He might not,

at the last day, pronounce their condemnation to the eternal punishment He had forewarned them of. And He concluded this day's teaching in the Temple with the solemn declaration, that the words He had spoken were not His, but the Father's, Who had sent Him; and "I know that His commandment is everlasting life: whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father saith unto Me, so I speak."

Human language could not more distinctly declare His oneness with the Father, and that He had come from Heaven; and in refusing to hear Him they were refusing to hear the Father, and in rejecting Him, they rejected the Father. And surely no human imagination could have imagined such a scene as is here described, and such lessons given by a mortal man, unless they were real events.

Evening came, and drawing His illustration from light and darkness—as to the condition of believers and unbelievers—He departed from the Temple and returned to Bethany. Thus ended the second day of the Passover preparation. On the first day He was anointed for His burial; on this second day, He presented Himself in the Temple as the Pascal Lamb of God, ready for sacrifice. And it was a day of wonders—the Hosannas, the cleansing of the Temple, the miracles and teaching, the Father's recognition, the denouncing the unbelief of the Rulers—and yet no attempt was made to arrest Him.





CHAPTER XXXV.

THE THIRD DAY OF CHRIST'S PASSION.

Monday morning our Lord and the Apostles went from Bethany to the Temple, followed by a few disciples. The absence of the people, and of the enthusiasm of yesterday, proved that His enemies were making themselves feared; and Christ knew what the change portended. But He made no effort to escape from the enemies, as He did a few weeks before when He retired to the wilderness of Ephraim; fearing no violence He remitted no duty, but was more earnest in doing His last work, as He saw the end approaching.

The road from Bethany to Jerusalem, on the Eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, is memorable from some of the saddest events in Christ's life; He walked over it twice daily in His passion week; "at one end of it He was crucified, and from the other end ascended to Heaven." As they went up this morning, they saw a fig-tree in leaf; and as the fruit forms before the leaf, it should have had fruit, but it was barren; and Christ went to it—not for fruit, but to give a lesson to His disciples—and He said to it, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth and forevermore;" and, at the sound of His voice, the tree withered.

Yesterday Christ declared, in the Temple, that He had come into the world for its final judgment; and He judged and

condemned the Jewish nation and Church then. The tree full of leaves was a type of the self-righteous Rulers and the corrupt Church, which were trusting to the ceremonial of the Law, and bearing no fruits of its righteousness; and the blasting of the tree was a parabolic representation to His disciples of what was coming on the nation, when the next day He would pronounce its probation ended. And by His power over the vegetable kingdom, He showed the disciples that He had power also to put an end to the old unfruitful Kingdom of God.

St. Mark puts the cleansing of the Temple this day, after the withering of the fig-tree; but St. Luke, who is more regardful of chronology, says it was yesterday. And it is more probable, because it accords best with the events of that day; and that He should cleanse it before He presented Himself there as ready to be offered, and to inaugurate the new Dispensation. They agree as to the fact, the day is of no moment; and the disagreement proves, that there was no collusion between them. One, may have written from personal knowledge; and the other, from hear-say.

As Christ entered the Temple this morning, no multitudes followed Him, no Hosannas hailed Him; and the silence was ominous of the increasing influence of His enemies. And as soon as He began to teach, the Chief Priests and Scribes came to Him, and demanded, "By what authority doest Thou these things? And who gave Thee this authority?" And the wonderful dignity and readiness with which He answered and confounded them, in the repeated assaults they made on Him this day, are also proofs of His Divine Nature; for He silenced all the power and craft of the wisest and ablest men in the whole nation, by His superior wisdom.

One single question rebuked and silenced this delegation, "Was the Baptism of John from Heaven, or of men?" They could reason well, if they had no faith; and they dared not say

it was from Heaven, because He would condemn them for not believing in John and receiving His baptism. And they feared to say it was of men, because all the people believed him to be a prophet from God; and they would condemn themselves for not believing in him. They said, they could not tell; and He said to them, "Neither tell I you, by what authority I do these things."

As the Rulers hatred increased, so did Christ's boldness in warning them of the evils they would bring on the nation for their rejection of Him; they were sinning away their days of grace, and He devoted the last two days of His public ministry in trying to bring them to repentance.

He spake several Parables, full of solemn warning for the Rulers; and all bearing on the two points, that He is the Christ—and they are rejecting Him and preparing themselves for rejection by God, as being no longer His people. But the narratives of the Evangelists so differ, that it is impossible to follow the order of the discourses; but that of the Two Sons appears to have been the first, and bearing upon the question He had asked them respecting John's baptism.

He asked them, "what think ye of the man who had two sons, to whom he said, 'go work to day in my vineyard:' and the first said, 'I will not!' but he afterwards repented, and went; and the second said, 'I go Sir, and went not?'" The first son represented the publicans and harlots; and the second son was the Pharisees, who professed to do God's will and did it not. The former had believed John's preaching and repented, and were now believing in Him; and would be received into the Kingdom of God, before them.

Then followed, the Parable of the Vineyard: "The owner had put it in perfect order, let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country; and as the time of the harvest came he sent his servants to receive it. They beat one, stoned another, and

killed another; but last of all he sent his son, and they said 'Let us kill him, and seize on his inheritance;' and they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him."

And Christ asked the Pharisees, what they thought the Lord of the vineyard would do to such men? And they answered, "He will miserably destroy them, and let the vineyard to others." They did not see how adroitly He had made them condemn themselves, and foretold the penalty that would follow; and which He made more apparent by quoting the Psalm that predicted the atrocity they were fulfilling in seeking His life—the Son the Father had sent, to take possession of His earthly vineyard—so the kingdom would be torn from them, and given to the Gentiles. And He said whoever fell on that stone would be broken; but on whomsoever it falls, it will grind Him to powder—which was fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem, and Jewish nationality ever since.

The Pharisees saw the application of the Parable, and were enraged, and sought to lay hands on Him; but they feared the people. But Christ had no fear of them, and spake another Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son; in which He outshadwed what He and they were doing, and the awful penalty that would come.

The former Parable warned the Rulers of the judgment of God impending on them, for rejecting His Son; but the marriage of the king's son represented their rejection of that kingdom—called the kingdom of Heaven—because He came from Heaven to reorganize it, and finally annex it to His kingdom. And this warned them of the danger of rejecting that. God, the Father, made the wedding for His Son—and the marriage was to His bride, the Church, or the kingdom of God on earth.

The first servants sent to call those bidden to the marriage, were the preachers of the first dispensation—Seth, Enoch, and Noah. All things were ready as soon as man fell, and the Church

outside of Paradise was instituted, with its new covenant of sacrifice, which looked forward to Christ for its efficacy, through the righteousness obtained by obedience to God's laws; but the people refused it, and would not come. Christ says nothing of their fate; but St. Peter says, "God spared not the old world—bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly."

The next servants were sent after God had prepared His oxen and fatlings, and all things were ready; these were the prophets and priests after the kingdom had taken an organized, visible form, given it by God on Mt. Sinai, after the pattern of the kingdom of Heaven. But the people made light of this, went to their farms and merchandise; and the remnant took His servants, evil treated and slew them. The next day Christ told these Pharisees, "Ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them who killed the Prophets." Then the king was wroth, and sent forth His armies to destroy the murderers, and burned up their city—a renewal of the former prophecy. The wedding was ready then, the Bridegroom was there; and by Him they are now declared unworthy to enter His kingdom.

Finally the servants sent out by Christ into the highways, to bring in all they could find both bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests, were the Apostles and Seventy, who had gone over all the Holy Land; these were the sinners who had prepared their wedding garments by faith in Him, and by repentance and baptism.

But now the King had come; Christ was soon to be proclaimed King of the Jews by Pilate. He was there in the Temple, as the Son of Man, to declare the Jewish nation without a wedding garment, and to tell the Rulers how they would appear when arraigned before Him, and what He would then say to

them. The man "was speechless;" and the king said to the servants, the angels, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast Him into outer darkness; and there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The Parable concludes with a prophecy concerning the future of His kingdom, "Many are called but few are chosen." The called are all who heard Christ or His ministers then, and all who have since heard their successors or read His Gospel; the chosen are those who believe in Christ, enter His kingdom, and strive after a righteousness like His.

The Pharisees understood the Parable, and were further enraged; and tried to entangle Him in His words in some way, that they might make an excuse for arresting and bringing Him before the Rulers, to speedily accomplish His death. But His matchless wisdom and knowledge was too much for their devices and cunning; and after three attempts to ensnare Him, they were repulsed and defeated before all the multitude in the Temple. And He stood there, Lord of the Temple, master of the situation, and no man could lay hands on Him.

The Pharisees, finding themselves so far defeated, now called to their help the Herodians, whom they hated because they favored the Roman dominion over their country; but they laid aside their personal animosity, that day, and united with them to conspire against Christ. And prefacing their attack with the hypocritical cant, which was the real truth, "We know Thou teachest the way of God in truth, and carest for no man," they asked, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or no?" And it seemed to them impossible for Christ to escape their wiles, whether He answered yes or no; because if He said yes, they would accuse Him to the Rulers as an enemy to their authority, and weaken the faith of many of the people in Him. And if He said no, they would accuse Him to the Roman Governor, as a seditious person, or revolutionist, who was preparing to make

Himself a king, and establish a kingdom opposed to the Romans.

They first committed themselves as witnesses for Christ's teaching the truth, and His fearlessness of man; and then He showed them that He was more than man, by making them see that He knew their craftiness—asking them, "Why tempt ye me?" calling them hypocrites, and confounding them by His answer:

"Show Me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it?" They say Cæsar's; and He said unto them, "Render to Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's; and unto God, the things which be God's." They could not entrap Him before the people; but, repulsed and confused, they marvelled at His answer, and were silenced. No human cunning ever circumvented Him; all the legal learning and ability of the nation were in that delegation, but they were repulsed and silenced as easily as if they had been children assaulting Him—and that by a copper penny.

Meanwhile Christ evinced true loyalty and reverence for the laws of both God and man; because, though the Romans had subjugated His country, He knew it was God's will, and He advocated obedience to its foreign rulers. He regarded the moral rather than the spiritual relations which bound the people to the government under which they lived; these were sacred to Him, but were an aggravation to the Jews.

The conspirators being silenced, a delegation of Sadducees propounded a question which none but God could answer. They did not believe in the resurrection of the body, and asked Christ how it would be, where seven men had one woman for a wife, in the resurrection, "Whose wife of the seven shall she be?"

This law in Deuteronomy, of successive marriage of brethren, was supposed to be a mystical type of the resurrection of the body, because of its preservation of life-seed through successive generations. But the Sadducees expected to puzzle Christ, and confirm their belief in no resurrection.

The question admitted that Christ claimed to know the mysteries of man's future life; but the askers supposed He would oppose Moses—saying it is not lawful to have but one wife—and so be liable to the accusation of opposing the decision of the Rulers. And here, again, His wisdom turned their opposition into testimony to confirm the faith of future generations in Him as the Christ, and elicited truth which otherwise might never have been known in this life.

Christ's answer refuted the assertion often made, that the Old Testament does not teach the resurrection of the body; and revealed what was before unknown, that our bodies then will be like the angels, and there will be no marriage in Heaven. And He declared to the Sadducees, that they erred and did not know the Scriptures nor the power of God. And possibly there never will be any greater exercise of Christ's power, than that when He calls new spiritual bodies out from their elements of nature, into which the millions of mankind have entered; and makes them immortal tabernacles for the immortal spirits, which will return from Hades and Paradise to animate them.

And He referred them to the Scripture where God declared that their fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were yet living; which they did not doubt, in the spirit. Therefore, it would not be difficult for God to give them resurrection bodies like the angels.

Thus, fruitlessly, ended the second delegation to entrap Him. Meanwhile, a Scribe—a lawyer, who had heard Christ's words to the Sadducees, and was impressed by the wisdom and probable truth of His sayings—asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" It is not apparent whether his intentions were good or evil; probably it was pride or ambition to see if he could not confound Christ, who had put the Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees to silence; and so make a reputation for himself before the people.

Christ answered the Scribe, according to the law, "To love God supremely, and his neighbor as himself," which was always a summary of man's whole duty; because it leads to obedience to all God's laws, and to benevolence to all men. And the lawyer, impressed with Christ's Divine wisdom and manner, was almost persuaded to believe and become His disciple; for He said to him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

For a whole day, Christ had stood in the Temple—facing, repelling, and rebuking His enemies, and putting them to shame before the multitude; and now, as it drew towards evening, and He was soon to go from it, the scene changes and Christ becomes the questioner. As the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, He turns on these Rulers—the hostile Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees—and demands from them, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" And they say, "the Son of David;" thus He drew from them what prophecy said concerning Himself as the Christ, as a ground to convict their unbelief.

Then He asked, "How could David call Him Lord? And the Lord say to Him, 'My Lord, sit Thou on My right hand till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?' If David called Him Lord, how is He his Son?" These men had heard Christ's disciples and the children the day before, in the Temple, hailing Him with Hosanna's, as the Son of David, and coming in the name of the Lord.

By asking the question how Christ could be Lord and Son of David, He gave them a clue, if they had any faith, to perceive the mysterious relationship of His Divine and human nature—which He had shown them by His superhuman knowledge, His Heavenly doctrines, and mighty miracles. But they were deaf and blind, and confounded; and from that day, asked Him no more questions.

Then as Christ was about to leave the Temple, in the audience of all the people, He pronounced this severe rebuke on

these defeated enemies: "Beware of the Scribes, which wear long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and chief seats in the synagogues, and at feasts; but devour widows houses, and for a show make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation."

With this defiant rebuke of His enemies, He went out of the Temple, and sat down opposite the Treasury, the great money chest, which was on the right in entering, and looked on the people as they were casting into it their offerings to the Lord. In this public place, He was before all the people leaving the Temple; and He showed them that His enemies had no power to lay their hands on Him, nor avenge His rebukes, any more than they had to catch Him in His words.

And then, anxious as He was on all occasions to make passing events convey some useful lesson, and, as if glad to turn His mind from the evil hearts He had condemned, He looked on the pious people putting their gifts into the Treasury; and He let the people around Him see, that He knew the humble and contrite hearts as well. And He told them how the offerings of the rich and poor look in God's sight.

The rich were casting into the Treasury of their abundance, and a poor widow, possibly grieving that she could not give like them, cast in her two mites. And Christ called the attention of the disciples to her, and said, "She hath cast in more than they all; they have given of their abundance, but she of her penury hath cast in all the living she had." And that manifested His Divine knowledge, to tell what this poor stranger had done. Thus ended the third day of Christ's passion; and He departed from the Temple, and returned to Bethany.



CHAPTER XXXVI

CHRIST'S LAST TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE.

Yesterday, Christ silenced His enemies in the Temple, so that none dared ask Him any more questions; but the common people heard Him gladly, and enjoyed the discomfiture of His enemies, because they knew He was the benefactor of the poor and the afflicted. This morning He went with the disciples from Bethany to the Temple, to give the Rulers His last warning. And as they passed the fig tree, Peter called Christ's attention to it; and with His divine "Verily, verily, I say unto you," if they had faith they could not only do the same, but remove mountains; and whatsoever they asked in prayer would be given. He taught them many times, that faith in Him would empower them to do works like His, and form in them a character like His. But any attempt to test His promise without faith dishonors Him; because it lacks the conditions on which the answer is pledged, and will fail. This miracle has been reproached as an act of anger or useless exercise of power, and unworthy of Christ; but, before His teaching ended that day, they perceived how it was a type of the doom of Jerusalem, and the old kingdom of Israel.

This last warning to the Rulers showed that it was rather in sorrow than anger, that He had symbolically foretold the ruin

they were drawing on themselves, and the nation and Jerusalem. For three years they had been watching and resisting Him, and for months seeking to kill Him; and He had proved His Messiahship, not only by His holy life, and doctrines, and miracles, and silencing them, and confounding their attempts to thwart His influence with the people, and above all that they could not arrest nor injure Him. And three days before they had heard the Father's voice in the Temple, saying that He had glorified Him, and would glorify Him; and all had failed to make them believers, and now nothing remained but to pronounce their doom.

That He should have been admitted to the Temple this day, after the order given for His arrest, and after His denunciation of the Rulers as He was leaving the Temple last evening, shows that He restrained their wrath and power by His Divine will; and that He went there and renewed His rebukes of the Scribes and Pharisees, calling their names, and declaring terrific woes, and no one daring to question or oppose Him, is one of the strongest proofs He gave them of His Messiahship; and it is now to us, that He held them by His Divine power.

When Christ appeared in the Temple, the people who loved Him gathered around Him to listen to His teaching; there was no tumult or excitement, and He first addressed His instruction to them. But that was only a prelude for the final charge, and the woes He had come to declare to His enemies, whose hatred, and opposition, He had so long patiently borne—showing His desire at this last hour to make them believe and repent, or else leave them without excuse for the awful crime they were about to commit.

No wonder that His words were bold, and His denunciations of the Scribes and Pharisees such as were never before spoken by man to men; and that He poured out the thunders of His Divine knowledge in words that must have scorched their

souls, if they had not sinned away their day of grace, and hardened their hearts to stone—because He knew it was the last time He would appear in the Temple, and the last public discourse He would deliver to these sinners, who, the next night, would arrest Him, and the following day crucify Him.

The report that Christ was teaching in the Temple soon spread in Jerusalem, and the Rulers of the Jews assembled around Him; and knowing their treachery, and that they would that day bribe Judas to betray Him, He turned on them with an indignation that had been three years repressed, and wasted in efforts to make them believe in Him—after such proofs of His Messiahship, as none but God could give, and as a final effort to bring them to repentance—and gave them His last warning.

His first charge was to His disciples and the multitude, to obey and beware of the Scribes and Pharisees; and what masterly wisdom and discrimination in the paradoxical words: He said they must avoid their wicked works, and must not make them an excuse for neglecting their teaching according to the Law. This lesson showed that He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfill and uphold it until the Gospel was ready to take its place. And it was for His Church in all future times, to assure her members that the unworthiness of the administrators of its government and sacraments would not invalidate their acts. And He choose Judas, who was a hypocrite and thief, and gave him power to teach and work miracles; to show what He meant, and which was a blessed lesson. Otherwise, many might doubt all their lives whether they had received His sacraments lawfully or no.

And Christ practiced Himself what He taught, by His loyalty to the Rulers and the old kingdom of God; because He had always revered them, and obeyed the Law and ordinances of the Jewish Church. For the only accusation against Him was Sabbath-breaking, and that was admissible in case of works

of mercy and benevolence; and so was not, even in the strict Jewish sense, a violation. And His example, and the advice given yesterday to pay tribute to Cæsar, was the beginning of the new era, and the modern spirit of patriotism and loyalty, such as the world never before had seen, and such superhuman love and forbearance as God only possesses—loyalty to Cæsar, and Pilate, and Herod; loyalty to Scribes and Pharisees, to Annas and Caiaphas, because the powers that be are ordained by God. Thus He first promulgated the great principle of obedience to law, because it is the only stability of human governments, secures the right of all, makes good government possible, and which has ever since been tending to make all governments better; and without the supremacy of law no government can long exist. He enumerated their sins of imposing burdens on others which they would not share, doing all their good works to be seen of men, vain glorious, embroidering their garments with texts of Scripture they did not obey; their pride in choosing the chief places at feasts and in the synagogue, and the desire for reverence, and being called Rabbi in the markets.

These things His disciples must avoid; and call no one Master but Him, which was to be forever a warning against individualism, and setting one's self up as a religious leader and reformer, that would lead to schism from His kingdom—as it did in the early ages, and as it had led to manifold modern heresies, by men who have led away followers after them, and caused the confusions of Christendom.

Neither must His disciples call any man father, spiritually, because God is their father; and Christ is the Head of His Church, and all mankind are brethren through Him. And this was the beginning of the new doctrine of the equality of men in God's sight, the principle that has gradually caused the emancipation of serfs, and slaves, and the elevation of the masses of the people, and made human government by the will of the

people possible, and the highest manifestation of Christian civilization. And this lesson He concludes by insisting on that great duty of humility, so opposed to unsanctified human nature, and so hard for even the regenerate to learn, but which He manifested in His own life, "I am among you as One Who serveth." Because self-exaltation will bring abasement from God; and self-negation will be exalted by Him.

Christ had been all day teaching, and no attempt was made to arrest Him; and as it was then drawing towards the evening, there in the Temple of God, as its Divine Lord who knows all hearts, He pronounced those woes on the Scribes and Pharisees; and concluded by foretelling the destruction they would bring on themselves and the Temple, and forever put an end to the Daily Sacrifice and worship of the old kingdom.

Our Lord began His public teaching with pronouncing Beatitudes on all who would become His disciples; and to-day He ended it by pronouncing woes on the Rulers of the nation, who rejected Him. Each woe is preceded by calling the Scribes and Pharisees by name, and declaring them hypocrites, as if their whole character were summed up in that single word.

The first woe, was for shutting up the kingdom of Heaven—not entering it themselves, nor suffering others to enter it; for many Rulers believed in Christ, but were afraid to confess Him, because of their opposition.

The second woe, was for their avarice and robbery of widows and their pretentious prayers; for these they would receive a greater damnation.

The third woe, was for their proselytism; it had no zeal for God's honor. But by their traditions and false doctrines, they made them two-fold more the children of Hell than themselves; because, as Gentiles without God's law, they would be judged accordingly.

The fourth woe, was for being blind guides, and for perjury.

and trifling with oaths. They are called fools and blind, because they taught that swearing by the altar and Temple were nothing; but swearing by the gold of the Temple and the gift of the altar, was sinful. And they were asked, "Whether is greater, the gold, or the Temple that sanctified the gold: or the gift, or the altar that sanctified the gift?" And Christ said, "That whoso sweareth by the altar sweareth by it, and by all things thereon; and whoso sweareth by the Temple, sweareth by it, and by Him who dwelleth therein; and whoso sweareth by Heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him who sitteth thereon." Thus, He convicted them of their blindness and profanity.

The fifth woe, was for their hypocrisy in paying tithes on mint, annis, and cummin; and neglecting the weightier matters of the Law, judgment, mercy, and faith. They knew their own prophets taught that—to deal justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with God, was of more value in His sight than whole burnt offerings—much less their pretentious paying tithes on garden herbs; and He repeated to them the Proverb of "straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel," which they did as blind guides leading the blind.

The sixth woe, was carefulness in making clean the outside of household vessels, while their hearts within were full of extortion and excess; and He warned them to make their hearts clean, and then the outside conduct would be clean also.

The seventh woe, was in substance like the former; they were, by their hypocrisy, like whited sepulchres—beautiful without, but full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness within. And He accused them of being descendants of the men who murdered the prophets; and He concluded, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, (who are filling up the measure of your fathers) how can ye escape the damnation of Hell?" And this language would have had no sting, if these men did not believe in Hell, and its future eternal punishment.

Then follows the prophecy of what these men will do to the Rulers, Christ will send to take their places; they will persecute and scourge them from city to city. And looking at the vast aggregate of their hypocrisy and wickedness, how they have abused and profaned the trust of the kingdom of God committed to them, and are in two days more to cause His crucifixion, He concluded with the crushing indignation of His Divine wrath—that the blood of all the martyrs from Abel to Zacharias will be required of them for their stubborn unbelief, and willful hard-heartedness in rejecting Him.

And this with His solemn declaration, “Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come on this generation;” and, as if overwhelmed with sorrow, that neither His love nor mercy, His warnings or threatenings would arouse them from their unbelief and wickedness, or save them from their impending destruction; and, as He saw in prophetic vision the awful retribution, and the utter desolation which the fury of the Roman soldiers would bring on Jerusalem, His pity and compassion were moved to their depths; and He poured out that loving, mournful, and touching lament:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them who are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”

“Behold your house is left unto you desolate!”

Thus He pronounced their probation ended. There was no longer salvation to be obtained in the old kingdom, the Temple was henceforth desolate, deserted by its Lord; and He departed from the Temple never again to appear there. And after two days more, He was to offer Himself as the one Great Sacrifice; and the Daily Sacrifice would no longer be available for the true worship of God, or for man’s salvation. The Temple will be desolate, until it is made a desolation.

It has been said that Christ's discourse has a severity and bitterness unworthy of a Christian gentleman, much less the Son of God. But to judge it correctly, the times and circumstances which called for it must be considered, and the provocation and aim in view; and then, so far from being censurable, it was both merciful and commendable.

Our Lord had been three years warning and lovingly manifesting His Divine power, and calling the Scribes and Pharisees to believe in Him, to repent, and be saved; and He had shown them by His benevolence, and humility, and holy life, that He was more than any man they had ever known, or heard of. Yet they had reviled Him, accused Him of blasphemy, of having a devil, and being in league with the devil, and casting out devils by the Prince of Devils; thus making themselves witnesses that He did cast them out. And all this time they had seen His self-restraint; and that while He had it in His power to injure or destroy them, He did not, until they had filled up the measure of their wickedness, had sinned away their day of grace. And as He was that day to end His mission to the nation, nothing else remained to be done but to tell them truths they did not and could not deny; and of the destruction they were bringing on the nation, and the eternal punishment on themselves.

But they were utterly reprobate; that awful discourse, which it would seem were enough to arouse them from their unbelief, made no impression on their adamant hearts; they had shut up the kingdom of Heaven from themselves and others, and nothing remained for Him but to pronounce their doom.

And there was also a lesson there for His disciples, and for all mankind to the world's end. Those woes are yet sounding down the Christian centuries, a Prophecy yet; a standing memorial to their descendants of the consequences of their ancestors' unbelief, and persecution, and killing of the Lamb of God—and the Saviour of the world; and as a warning to all mankind of

the future eternal penalty which awaits all who reject Him now, by refusing to believe in Him, and obey His Gospel and Church.

As Christ left the Temple, having foretold its destruction, the last words He said were, "Ye shall not see Me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord." This meant that by His departure the Temple was deserted by the presence of the Lord, no more sacrifice or service there would be acceptable to Him—its Door of Mercy was shut.

Yet God's love and mercy for His covenant people was not exhausted; out of this chastisement, and the perpetual desolation of the Temple, Christ threw this rainbow of hope, this prophecy of a better day, when they would hail Him as "Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord," and acknowledge Him as their own God and Saviour; when the prophecy shall be fulfilled that God will gather the outcasts of Israel from afar, and He will comfort His people and have mercy on them. And St. Paul says this will be, by grafting them back into Christ's kingdom, which is the Branch grown from the root of their own old kingdom of God. And this day may not now be remote; Christianity is breaking up the old kingdoms of darkness, it has emancipated millions of slaves and serfs in a day, it has lifted up the whole substratum of the common people to a condition better than the nobles before Christ; and when God causes it to take hold of Judaism, its return to His kingdom will also be in a day. Already we see its dawn—more real conversions have been made in this century, probably, than in the eighteen which preceded it.

That Christ should have so taught in the Temple that day, and so held the wrath and power of the Scribes and Pharisees that they could not molest nor arrest Him, and that He should have been permitted to go away peaceably, is really as great a miracle as any He ever wrought.



CHAPTER XXXVII'

WEDNESDAY EVENING.

On leaving the Temple Christ lingered a moment near the Treasury; and the disciples, remembering His words respecting its destruction, and expressing their doubts, called His attention to its magnificent walls, and immense foundations, which all Jews believed would last until the world's end. And He renewed the prophecy, prefaced by His Divine "I say unto you," and declared its ruin would be so entire, that not one stone would be left on another; and for forty years the Jews, doubtless, ridiculed the prophecy.

Christ did not return with His disciples to Bethany, as He did daily before, but went to the Mount of Olives. And there the Apostles asked Him privately, when this destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple would be; and what signs would precede it. They supposed it would soon happen; and then the end of the world would come, because they expected the two events would be contemporaneous.

Three Evangelists recorded this solemn discourse, and each one relates some particular omitted by the others; because His answer to their question led to many notable prophecies and revelations, and proves that He had a perfect knowledge of the future rise and fall of nations, and of all political as well as

religious events, and of the evils to come on the world before its final catastrophe.

Christ said, false Christs and Prophets would arise to draw away disciples, and deceive, if it were possible, the elect; and there would be wars and rumors of wars, and fearful sights in the Heavens—men's hearts failing them from fear of things coming on the earth, with earthquakes, famines, and pestilence. But it has been said, No foreknowledge was needed to foretell these things, because they had always been; but history teaches that they were more terrible before, and at Jerusalem's fall. Tiberius was banished, Caligula was killed by conspirators, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius were dethroned, and Nero declared a public enemy by the Senate. And Josephus says: A flaming meteor, like a fiery sword, hung over the city for a year; and chariots and armed soldiers were seen in the clouds above the city, as if besieging it.

And these were but the beginnings of sorrow, the prelude to the terrible catastrophe which, he says, "exceeded all the destructions either God or man had ever brought on the world." This was to be the final death agony of the old kingdom, when its worship and daily sacrifice were to cease; and to leave the world's course free for Christ's kingdom to run and be glorified.

Before that, the Apostles would be persecuted and brought before kings: St. James was killed by Herod; Paul, by Nero; and Peter and others suffered before its fall, as witnesses for Christ; and when the Gospel had been preached to all nations, then Jerusalem's end would come. St. John carried it to Asia; Mark, to Africa; Peter, to Babylon; Thomas, to India; Paul, to Greece, the islands of the Mediterranean, and Great Britain. They were commanded not to fear men, for the Holy Ghost would teach and guide them; and though the love of many would wax cold, whoever endured to the end would be saved.

And in answer to when this would be, He said, "When the abomination of desolation foretold by Daniel appeared before the

city, then His disciples must flee from it. "That was, the eagles on the Roman banners, which the soldiers sacrificed to and worshipped as emblems of the Emperors. Then they must not delay, for it would be a time of woe such as the world had never before seen; and the proverb, "Where the carcass is, the eagles will gather," referred to the desolation of Jerusalem, and the end of the world. For the eagles were also symbols of the evil angels, who will conduct the wicked to Hell, where the evil days for them never will be shortened.

Those prophecies were made to correct the false opinions of the Apostles, that the fall of Jerusalem, and the end of the world would be simultaneous. And He told them before the latter event the sun would be darkened, the moon withdraw her light, and the powers of the heavens be shaken; and His second coming would be like the blazing of lightning across the horizon; and in a time of great enlightenment and immorality, then the end would come.

The Sun represents the Son of Man, the Sun of Righteousness; the Moon is His Church; and the Stars, great national Churches. The darkness began in the denial of Christ's Divinity among the Gentiles, the corruption of the Catholic Church and its divisions, and the fall of national Churches in Asia and Africa, even before St. John's death. The powers of the heavens was the Divine grace, which was seen in the Church before its corruption and division, that has been shaken; and the result is—that weltering sea of a divided Christendom, and the turbulent swellings of the numerous and ever increasing divisions, having the form of Christ's righteousness without its power, that has nearly girdled the earth.

The day of vengeance came, and the prophecy was literally fulfilled. The western world was astonished at the report, and to this day the siege and destruction of Jerusalem is unparalleled in history. When the soldiers entered the city, they found

the streets filled with piles of festering dead bodies—and they slew men, women, and children until the gutters ran with blood; and entering the Temple, six thousand yet alive were killed, and the blood of the priests and people mingled together; the Temple was fired, and made a ghastly ruin of burning embers and smoking bodies; its foundations were dug up, and the walls of the city, except at the west, were torn down; pestilence, famine, and robbery followed, but for which the exasperated conquerors would have carried slaughter to the Christians, who remembered Christ's prophecy, and when the siege began escaped to Perea. For their sakes the days of terror were shortened; but not until the blood of all the martyrs, from Abel to Christ, was avenged by God, for whom they suffered for righteousness sake. And now the city looks old and decayed, and its lines and walls are hardly any where identical with those Christ saw; the houses are old and miserable, the streets are filthy, the pavements broken and trodden down by the Gentiles, and look as if Christ's woes yet rested on it.

Finally, telling them that some of that generation would live to see His predictions on Jerusalem fulfilled, He closed His prophetic vision, saying the Gospel would be a second time preached over all the world; then the sign of the Son of Man would be seen coming on the clouds of Heaven, with His angels, to summons the dead and judge them. But of that day and hour neither the angels, nor He, as the Son of Man, knew. But the condition of the world would be the same as it was in the days of Noah—men eating, and drinking, and marrying, and giving in marriage—ungodly, and corrupt, until the flood came and swept them away. Such was the case, when Jerusalem fell; and such will it be the third time, when Christ comes to judge the world.

Meanwhile, His disciples must watch and pray, during His absence into the far country; lest coming suddenly He find them sleeping, "for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man

cometh." And faithful servants shall be made rulers over many things; and the unfaithful shall have their portion with the hypocrites, where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Christ, yet alone with the Apostles in the darkness and solitude of night in the Mount of Olives, continued His personal instruction to them, on the responsibility to devolve on them as the Rulers of His Church, which was also for their successors to the world's end, in the Parable of the Ten Virgins and Ten Talents; and it was His last teaching respecting His kingdom.

He likened the universal Church to the kingdom of Heaven, and illustrated His meaning by the wise and foolish virgins. The vessels are their bodies, temples of the Holy Ghost; the lamps are their visible righteousness; the oil is the Holy Spirit, received through His regenerating and sanctifying influences; and the time of waiting for the Bridegroom is the interval between Christ's departure from the world, and returning to receive the Church as His Bride.

At midnight the trump of the Arch-Angel will announce His coming, and the end of the world; and the going out to meet Him, is the resurrection of the dead; the taking of their lamps and trimming them, is the test of their righteousness; the wise virgins have oil in their lamps and vessels, but the foolish virgins' lamps go out—there is no oil in their vessels; they have received the grace of God in vain. They are then prompt in going to buy, but it was too late! And when they returned the door was shut, and the Bridegroom knew them not. They asked to borrow oil of the saints whose lamps burned; but they had no superfluous stock to supply their neglect—not enough for us and for you—and they remained in the outer darkness.

Then He spake the Parable of the Talents. This is substantially the same as the former, only repeated in another figure more easily understood. The talents are called the Lord's

money; and so, like the oil, signify the grace of God committed to His ministers and people.

And the kingdom of Heaven is Christ's Church, travelling into a far country, down the course of time; in that, each member has a trust of one, two, or ten talents, according to the measure of God's gifts, which he must use to increase his righteousness, and finally render an account of. The man with one talent may have the approving sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and the reward of eternal life, by wisely using it, as well as others with five or ten talents; and the warning is to do duty faithfully in whatever state of life God puts us, or use whatever measure of spiritual grace we have to the best of our ability; then we shall be sure of entering into the joy of our Lord, and having eternal trusts of our own, in our future life, when He returns to reckon with us. And if we fail to do so—this was the warning to the Apostles, to the Christian ministry, and to every member of His Church—then the sentence will be, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

And then, as if in a fuller explanation of the two Parables respecting the kingdom of Heaven, He concluded His solemn discourse with His Apostles by telling them that the Son of Man will then come in His glory, with all the holy angels with Him; and He will sit on the throne of His glory, and all nations shall be assembled before Him; and He will set the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on the left; and then He speaks of Himself as the King of the Kingdom, King and Judge. "He will say to those on the right hand, come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave Me meat; thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; a stranger, and ye took Me in; I was sick, and ye visited Me; and in prison, and ye came unto Me." The wicked are charged with neglecting these duties, and

His sentence is, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

The last marvel of the Parable is, that Christ takes the least evil done to His disciples as done to Himself; that the good and evil reach to His glorified humanity in Heaven, and the rewards and punishments will be eternal. It was so, under the former dispensation: to touch prophet or priest, was to touch God Himself; and that is the reason why the penalty is so terrible, and why the world's destruction will be, and Hell is, so terrific.

But it is said this term "everlasting" is applied to mountains, and other things in the Bible which are not eternal; and, therefore, it may be figurative respecting Hell. The meaning of Scripture can be understood only by the context; if the punishment of Hell may not be eternal, then the reward of Heaven may not be; the same words are used for both. Then eternal life may come to an end; God is said to be the everlasting God, and then He may come to an end. The whole drift of revelation is against such an interpretation; and the eternal moral government of God requires that Heaven and Hell be eternal. The Greek *aiōnois* applied to temporal things means lasting, until the end of time; but applied to spiritual things, means as lasting as God and eternity; and the context always shows which meaning it has.

Christ first taught future rewards and punishments, as motives to influence men's conduct, and declared that they would be eternal in Heaven, or Hell; and His words are positive that the latter will be in unquenchable fire. It may be spiritual fire, as it is to be suffered in a spiritual body—a torture to that as intolerable as fire here to a physical body; even if the fire be figurative, it represents eternal and intolerable anguish.

But it is urged God is good, and cannot punish eternally temporal sin. No, He will not; and Christ never said He would. But the wicked will go into eternal punishment, because they are

wicked, for the character they formed here as enemies of God and sinners. Sin has in itself a self-inflicting suffering—they will sin there; because, if the love and mercy of God will not make them repent here, His justice and punishment will not there. And if they could repent, there will be no Redeemer to save them, because Christ's mediatorial work will have come to an end; and sinning, sin will inflict its penalty—the second death—suffering with no last pang to end it.

Men do not consider it unjust to inflict death here, or imprisonment for life, on the guilty and incorrigible; because it promotes the security and happiness of the majority, and the stability of government. It would be an imperfect government that did not punish rebels; and if God can endure the loss of His children from Heaven, when we know His reasons for eternal punishment, we would not have it otherwise if we could.

If it were possible for His justice to remit from His foes, it would be possible for His mercy to His friends to end; and that would destroy our ideas of His immutability, and the joy of Heaven. All Christ said respecting earthly things, was true; why should we doubt His word, respecting spiritual things? If He were not God He could not have known these things; and it is more difficult to believe that He invented such doctrines, than to believe they are true. It is because He is a loving God and Saviour, that He revealed the one for our warning, and the other for our encouragement.





CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE LAST PASSOVER.

When Christ had explained to the disciples the prophecy concerning Jerusalem and the end of the world, He said, "After two days is the Feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified;" and nothing now remained but to give the last instruction to the Apostles, to comfort them respecting His departure, to celebrate the last Pascal Supper, and institute His Sacramental Supper thereon.

It was impossible, that the rebukes and woes Christ pronounced on the Rulers and Jerusalem, and the way He confounded them before the people yesterday, should not have excited their wrath; and He had reserved the denunciation to that day, in order that they might have exactly time enough to arrest and try Him, that He might be crucified two days after, at the time of the killing of the last Pascal Lamb ever acceptably offered to God.

And we see, that all the preparations were controlled by Him; for, while He was telling His disciples of His coming death, the Chief Priests and Rulers called a Council in the palace of Caiaphas, and consulted how they might take Him, and by subtlety put Him to death. And lo! while they were assembled, Judas had stolen away in the darkness, to the Coun-

cil, and bargained to deliver Him to them for thirty pieces of silver; and they dismissed the plan of private murder, and from that time, "he sought opportunity to betray Him."

Nothing more is related of the transactions that night in the Mount, nor the doings of the next day until towards evening; and it looks as if the Apostle did not know how, or where, Christ spent the interval. It doubtless was alone, in prayer, gathering strength and courage for the appalling scenes before Him; and He could not appear publicly, without being arrested before He was ready to deliver Himself.

An awful silence and mystery hang over Thursday, until towards evening, like the stillness which precedes some great convulsion in nature—as there was the next day when, as Nature's God, He suffered. But towards evening the veil lifts, and two disciples come to Christ, and ask, "Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Passover?" It would be most likely that He would say, with Simon at Bethany; but no, they must go to Jerusalem. He would show them that His enemies, who were seeking His life, could not touch Him until His preparations to die were made; and He told them, that there they would meet a man bearing a pitcher of water, to follow him, and tell him, the Master will eat the Passover with His disciples at his house; and he will show them his guest chamber, and there they must make ready. They went and found it as He said, and prepared the Passover.

The Jews ate their Pascal Lamb on the fourteenth day of the Month Nisan, which day was our Saturday; but killed it the evening before at three o'clock, and Christ celebrated His Passover Thursday night, that He might be crucified the next evening at the hour when the Jews killed their Pascal Lamb. And as He annulled the old Sabbath, by transferring it to the original seventh day, the Christian first day—so also He abolished the old Passover, by keeping it the day before its institution,

and founding His Sacramental Supper on it, and to take its place in His kingdom; for He said He would drink no more of it, until He received it new in His kingdom.

When the hour was come, Jesus sat down with the twelve. He had told the eleven that Judas had betrayed Him; but he came with the others; and Christ's first words evinced that He knew the significancy of this act. "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

For fifteen centuries the Passover had been a type of Christ, and the germ which would develop into a sacrament for His kingdom; and on that last celebration He transferred and transmuted it into the Blessed Sacrament of His body and blood, as the true Paschal Lamb of God—by His consecration of the elements, and changing them from a Sacrificial to a Sacramental character—so as to convey all the benefits of His Sacrifice to the worthy receivers, and help it to fit them for an inheritance in the the kingdom of Heaven.

The kingdom of God had been at hand ever since the Baptist began his ministry; and now, it was to come. Christ would eat it no more as the Passover of the old kingdom, until the new kingdom had come; the true Lamb of God was about to be offered on the cross, then the veil of the Temple would rend, and the Ceremonial Law would end, and the Gospel and the kingdom be prepared when the Holy Ghost came from Heaven to inspire the Apostles, and empower them to begin the kingdom.

On the morrow the Lamb of God was to pass over the Red Sea of His own blood; and the old covenant—ratified with the blood of animals and man, which typified Christ's blood—was to end, and the new covenant in His blood would begin; and the old kingdom would die in Him, and pass over to the whole world—Jew and Gentile. And the Daily Sacrifice and Yearly

Passover would be changed for the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, in remembrance of Him, that He had given His life to take away the sins of the world, and convey that righteousness which is by faith in Him.

The Supper being ended, Christ laid aside His garments, girded Himself with a towel, poured water into a basin, and began to wash His disciples' feet, as an example of humility, and, doubtless, a symbol of the washing of regeneration; because, when Peter said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet," Christ answered, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me."

And Christ renewed the warning to Judas, "Ye are not all clean," though his feet were washed; and it was a warning to all His disciples, that the washing of regeneration will not save without a righteous life. Then Christ resumed His seat at the table, saying, that He had given them an example as their Lord and Master; "and ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

The Pascal Supper had three courses, in which were mystically enclosed the germ of the Christian Sacraments: first, a cup of wine taken with bitter herbs in a sauce made for the occasion, prefiguring the humbling dipping, or washing of baptism; second, a cup of wine, with unleavened bread, to be drunk with the lamb—the elements of the Blessed Sacrament; and a cup of blessing, and a Psalm ended the repast. It was this Sacramental Viaticum Christ received, as the support for His human nature across the valley of the shadow of death; and which He blessed and gave to the disciples as a perpetual remembrance of Him, and to be celebrated until His return from the far country He was going to, and as the abrogation of the whole ceremonial law.

Christ blessed the bread, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is My body which is given for you;" not the body present, for it was not yet offered in sacrifice. But it was the forgiving of His flesh, after a spiritual manner, as it was ever after to be given to His disciples: "Do this in remem-

brance of Me." But in giving the Cup, He said, "This Cup is the New Covenant in My Blood, that is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins"—which implies that baptism is not perfected until the Blessed Sacrament is received; and that the bread alone without the wine is no Sacrament, and gives no assurance that the baptismal covenant is ratified. Thus the Christian Sacraments were designed to convey Christ's spiritual life, to keep in remembrance His Sacrifice until He comes again in the glory of the Godhead.

The Sacrament does what Sacrifice could not—gives the life of the Sacrificed Lamb of God to the worthy receiver, so that it becomes a living spiritual force in him; as He said, "He that eateth My body, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and even he shall live by Me." Eternal life is more than immortality; sinners, as well as saints, will rise from the dead immortal, because of Christ's resurrection. But the eternal life He promised, is one of eternal glory, with God, our Father, in Heaven.

The Son of God was incarnate in our nature, to institute the Sacraments to make us partakers of His Divine Nature; and they sow in our bodies spiritual life, as the means to overcome evil in ourselves and the world, and attain a glorious resurrection. And the celebration of the Eucharist is one of the richest means of grace, and the most exalted worship we can render Him.

Then He said, "Now I tell you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He." And, as if weighed with sorrow, as much for Judas as for Himself, He said His spirit was troubled; and, as His last warning to Judas, He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, one of you shall betray Me." Each disciple anxiously asks, "Is it I?" until Judas' turn, and to his question Christ answered, "Thou hast said." The Eleven did not understand the reply; and St. Peter asked St. John—who was reclining so that his head was near our Lord's

breast—and he asked Him; and was told, “He to whom I give the sop”—a bit of bread dipped in the Pascal sauce. And He gave it to Judas, saying, “What thou doest, do quickly;” it was again night, and he went away in its darkness to the Council.

The Passover was the root of Christ’s two Sacraments, and foreshadowed the regeneration and sanctification to come by them. The flesh, and bread, and wine, gave vigor to man’s soul; but His consecration made them convey strength and refreshment to the spirit, and make it partaker of His righteousness, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven.

Christ’s consecration of the Bread and Wine changed them from a Sacrificial to a Sacramental nature; while they remained bread and wine, they had a Spiritual grace added to them; and analogy teaches how it was, and is, done. One of Christ’s titles is the Sun of Righteousness—and He transfuses the elements with His righteousness, so that it can be conveyed to the receiver; just as bread and wine exposed to the Sun’s rays receive caloric from them. The bread and wine are not changed, but a new principle is added—and we feel the heat in them; and how much more surely can Christ convey Spiritual blessings in a similar way, and all the benefits of His Sacrifice.

By the Sacrifices of the ancient Church, the death of Christ was prefigured to the world for four thousand years, to prepare the way for His coming; and for fifteen hundred years the Pascal Supper was partly Sacrificial and partly Sacramental—the beginning of the development of Sacrifice into Sacrament, as it was fulfilled and perfected by Christ on this last celebration. The Blessed Sacrament grew out of the Pascal Feast, and was engrafted on its root, and superceded it; and as the Pascal Lamb was slain to keep in remembrance that Christ would come to die, so also was the Blessed Sacrament instituted to keep in remembrance that He did come and die for us men and our salvation.

And the breaking of the Bread and pouring of the Wine, are the memorials of His Body broken, and Blood shed, by which His Church was to show forth His death, and receive the benefits of His Sacrifice, and prepare the world for His second coming.





CHAPTER XXXIX.

CHRIST'S DISCOURSE WITH THE ELEVEN.

When Judas had gone, Christ said to the eleven Apostles, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him"—words incomprehensible to them then; but showing that He knew His human nature was going to be glorified in the Godhead, and that His death would cause the final destruction of Satan's power.

Such language was impossible, unless Christ were the Son of God, the second person of the Godhead; and unless He were the Son of Man, going to God would give Him no new glory. And He said, "A little while I am with you (before another sunset He would be gone); a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. By this, shall all men know that ye are My disciples."

Peter inquired, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" And He said, "Whither I go thou can'st not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." Peter replied, "I will lay down my life for Thy sake;" but He replied, with His Divine "I say unto you," "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Satan has desired to have and sift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou art con-

verted, strengthen thy brethren." That he did, after his conversion from his denial of Him, by his tears and repentance of his sin. And in these ways Christ showed that He knew the details of all the events about to transpire.

And, although His own spirit was troubled at the foresight of the desertion and denial of His Apostles, He comforted them by the assurance that He was going to the Father in Heaven; to prepare places for them, and He would return and take them with Him to abide forever. Was there ever any such human love and forbearance? His divine love rose, as their poor, human love was about to fail; and when Thomas said, "We know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Christ answered, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh to the Father but by Me." And He is yet the Way, by His holy example; the Truth, by His Gospel; and the Life, by the sacraments of His body, the Church. And He said, "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also; and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him."

We see how imperfect the knowledge and understanding of the Apostles were; for Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us." And this drew from Him the confession, "He who hath seen Me, hath seen the Father;" and He reproved their dulness, saying, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" And He declared that His words and works were by the life of the Father in Him, and they must believe it.

That dulness looks strange to us; but it was impossible for them to believe in Him as a Person of the Godhead, while they retained their Jewish ideas of God, and u til the Holy Ghost came to enlighten them. But Christ promised, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he who will believe shall do greater works, because I go unto the Father." Was that a vain boast? Did those Apostles, who afterwards believed, do greater works?

Yes; they laid the foundations of His kingdom. Christ never made disciples out of Palestine; they planted Churches, and carried the Gospel over all the then known world. And Christendom is a greater work than all Christ's miracles, except the great one of man's redemption.

And He promised that whatsoever they asked the Father in His name "That will I do." The promise of power is to His name; and He knew His disciples would not ask for what He would not approve; and the Father will give you another Comforter who will abide with you forever. Here the mystery of the Holy Trinity was revealed—the Father, the Son, and the Comforter, whom the world cannot receive; but He shall be in you, and dwell in you, and guide you into all truth. And the ministrations of the Holy Spirit, through Christ's ministers, are greater works than Christ's miracles; because there is no visible presence or voice in His operations for our regeneration and sanctification.

And this great mystery was revealed, that Christ would return in the Comforter: "I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also;" and then they should know that He and the Father are one, and "ye are in Me and I in you." And had this promise not proved true, faith in Christ would have soon perished.

And Jude asked, how He would manifest Himself to them, and not to the world? And He answered, "My Father will love him (who loves Him and obeys His Word) and We will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him;" and when the Comforter comes—whom He now says is the Holy Spirit—He will bring all things to your remembrance; and had not this proved true, there would have been no written New Testament, no Christian Church, no Christian ministers; and all Christ did would have made no lasting impression in the world.

Again, He promised to give His disciples "My Peace;" such as they saw nothing earthly could disturb. And, therefore, their hearts need not be troubled nor afraid, at whatever was to befall Him, or them; because He was going to the Father, and would return to them: "If ye loved me ye would rejoice... for My Father is greater than I." Thus He laid Himself open to such tests as it was impossible for them to mistake, and as it would be impossible for Him to accomplish were He not God's incarnate Son. And He said, He told them all these things before they came to pass, "that when it is come to pass ye might believe." And the Evangelists testify that when they did come to pass, their faith in Him was established.

It looks as if Christ used every means possible to be given, to prove to the disciples His Divine Omniscience, Omnipresence, and Omnipotence; and if there had been imposture in His words or works, the stupidest of men could not have failed to see it, and none were more deeply interested to expose it. But they testify that after His resurrection they found His promises true, and every Christian now finds some of them confirmed by his own experience; and for this they believe in Him, trust in Him, as their all in all, and only hope of salvation.

After declaring Himself God, and one with the Father, He said, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman." The vine was a symbol of the Church of God; the members, the branches drawing their spiritual life from Him. Every branch not bearing fruit would be cut off; and fruitful ones would be purged to make them more fruitful; and the withered branches would be burned. And Christian experience testifies to the truth of some of these words.

The promise, looking like exaggeration, that His disciples shall have what they ask in prayer, is confirmed by experience now; if not given as asked, yet as best—as Christ's prayer in the Garden, otherwise impossible, was answered, without dis-

turbing a law of the moral government. And if they believe, love, and obey Him, God will be glorified; and they will abide in His love; and His joy would be in them, and their joy be full.

The promise to give what they asked, included physical as well as spiritual things. God made and controls all laws; because they would not ask things inconsistent for Him to give. In this way prayer was designed to educate them, to trust in God, to look to Him like children to a Father; because communion with Him will refine and elevate, and reflect His righteousness. And no one can live habitually in sin, who habitually prays; he will soon leave off sinning or praying. One universal answer to prayer is increasing power to do God's will, and increasing love of Him, learned by trying this promise.

Christ repeated His commandment to love one another, as if it fulfilled all duties. To die for a friend is a perfect test of human love; but His love is greater—to die for His enemies. If they will do His will, they shall be His friends. He had revealed to them His love by telling them what He had heard from the Father; and in the next life He will make them heirs of what He had received from the Father. He had ordained them to bring forth much fruit; and their fruit should remain, as the kingdom they organized, and the ministry they transmitted have remained, and will remain to the world's end.

But they will meet opposition and persecution; as He had; and as the world had hated Him, so would it hate them, and their successors. And at this day a thousand enemies in Christendom—many of them Scribes and Pharisees of worldly culture—prove His words true. Books are written denying His divinity and miracles, and reviling His disciples and religion; and a stream of the blood of Martyrs for His truth, has flowed from Calvary to our day, ending with Bishop Patterson pierced by the arrows of the Fijees, and the Christian Soldier, A. D. 1878, a victim of

Moslem fanaticism and hate, whose head cleaved by an axe into four parts, was said to be signed with the Sign of the Cross. Christ said, "All these things they will do unto you for My Name's sake, because they know not Him who sent Me."

Such are some of the modern proofs of Christ's truth and Messiahship; and it would have been impossible for any one but God, to thus foretell what would be going on in this world two thousand years after these words were spoken.

Then, summing up His own mission to the Jews, He said, "If I had not done among them works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father." And thus, He says, was fulfilled what the prophets foretold, "They hated Me without a cause."

Then followed His last great promise—that which was to be the climax of His Incarnation, and the last grand result of His work of redemption—the coming of the Comforter, who would take up His work and carry it on until the world's end. He is the Spirit of Truth; He will bring all things to their minds He had taught them; He would testify to Christ, and guide them into all truth, and bear witness to the world.

But the Apostles had an especial witness to bear, "because ye have been with Me from the beginning;" and now the Gospels and Epistles, and the very name of Apostles, and the Liturgies of His Church, and Churches, have come to us named after them; and their Gospels and Epistles are daily read by thousands, and thus testify for Christ. And He foretold this, that they might be steadfast under persecution; and future generations might be inexcusable if they did not believe Him to be the incarnate Son of God.

But Christ renewed His discourse, saying, "Now I go My way to Him who sent Me; and none of you ask, Whither goest Thou?" Either regret at His departure, or surprise that He

was to die—not crowned as king and leaving no visible kingdom—made them sorrowful, and afraid to ask whither He was going; without His presence and Almighty help, what could these few, poor, and uninfluential disciples do. Nevertheless, it was expedient that He should go away, else the Comforter would not come: “If I depart, I will send Him unto you.” It was better for them, and for Christ, and the world, that He should go; because He was never in but one country, was hated and persecuted unto death. But the Holy Spirit would be in all the world, and Christ in Him invisible, and so impossible to persecute Him. He would comfort, teach, lead, and sanctify them—bring all things He had said to their remembrance; and His great office for the world would be to reprove it of sin, righteousness, and judgment; striving in millions of hearts at the same time, and bringing all who will repent into the ways of righteousness, and making them God’s spiritual children.

The time for this last interview with His disciples, in the flesh, and the last discourse He was to speak to them, was drawing to an end; and He said, “I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now.” One, that He was the Second Person of the Godhead, “Howbeit when the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth,” tell them what He hears from the Father, and show them things to come. “He shall receive of Mine and show it unto you; all things the Father hath are Mine; therefore I said He shall take of Mine and show it unto you.” Surely, no words could declare more distinctly His unity in the Godhead.

And then followed the equally distinct assertion that in “a little while (before another day ends), ye shall not see Me; and again, a little while (after three days in the tomb), ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father.” Here was: First, His going away to Paradise; Second, His return to this world; Third, His coming back to see them, before His ascension to Heaven.

The disciples said among themselves, "What is this, He saith unto us; a little while and ye shall not see Me; and again a little while and ye shall see Me; and, because I go to the Father." And they confessed they did not know what He meant. Could any human mind have invented such a natural and beautiful incident as this, were it not real? Or would any men bent on deceiving the world have so recorded their own want of perception, after all Christ had said and done before them, if they were telling what was not a real fact?

Our Lord knew they were desirous to ask Him to tell them plainly what He meant by these little whiles, and going to the Father; and then hear His words, spoken with that oath-like solemnity, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." What a transition, this. The next day they saw Jesus on the cross, and that evening the Rulers were rejoicing; and the disciples hid themselves for fear that they, too, would follow Him by a similar death. Then, on the third morning, their sorrow was turned to joy, when the angel told Mary the Lord had risen, and the disciples found the tomb empty.

But Christ's soul was troubled as the time for His agony in the garden approached, and He was to be torn from His disciples; but He said, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you; and whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you." He had promised before, "Ask, and I will give you;" but now it is—ask the Father, in His name, and He will give—because "I and My Father are one." Is there not a Divine subtlety in this double statement of the truth, in a way no human mind would have thought of; but designed to convince cultivated minds, after they were enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and after Christianity had been for centuries expanding and quickening

the human intellect? Surely the Scribes and Pharisees of our day, who do not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ—when they compare Pagandom, when Christ came, with Christendom now—will be more guilty at the judgment, than those who crucified Him.

That new mode of prayer in Christ's name was incorporated into the Liturgies, and its petitions and Collects nearly all end, "for the sake of," or "through the merits of, Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ." And then, assuring the Apostles of the Father's love—because they loved Him, and believed that He came forth from the Father—He renewed His declaration, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." And the Apostles said, "Lo now speakest Thou plainly, and in no proverb. Now we are sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee; by this we believe, that Thou camest forth from God."

But He had yet one more thing to tell them, before the discourse ended, to help future generations also believe as they did; while they were on the top of this wave of faith, how must these words have fallen like a thunderbolt on their hearts and faith:

"Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to His own, and shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have Peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

And He continued the discourse, asking the disciples, "Lacked ye anything when I sent you out without purse, scrip, or shoes?" And they answered, "Nothing." Then said He unto them, "But now, he who hath a purse, let Him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he who hath no sword, let him sell his

garment and buy one. For I say unto you, that this which is written must yet be accomplished in Me: And He was reckoned with the transgressors; for the things concerning Me have an end." And they said, "Lord, here are two swords." And He said unto them, "It is enough." They utterly misunderstood His words; but the swords were there to be further witnesses for Christ, and for the painful scenes which were yet to be enacted.

And then He ended, foretelling what would soon follow: "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered," quoting the Prophecy of Zachariah concerning that very night; but yet comforting them by the promise, "But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee," whereby He assures them that He will continue to be the Shepherd of His Flock yet after His resurrection. And the Angel, whom the women met at the sepulchre on the resurrection morn, assured them that the promise and prophecy of Christ would be fulfilled in His own words, "Behold, He goeth before you into Galilee."





CHAPTER XL.

THE LAST PRAYER WITH THE APOSTLES.

Prayer, mental or vocal, is communion with God—though we do not know how the prayers go, nor the answers come—but all mankind have always prayed to idols, false Gods, or to the true God. And the earth has always been like a great censer, hanging in space, and swinging the prayers of its inhabitants like incense up to its Creator.

Before Christ, God was addressed as the Almighty, Jehovah, and the Lord God; and it was twenty-five centuries after Adam before He was called the Father. And Christ first taught men to pray to God as our Father, and in His name; and He ended His discourse at the last supper by commending the Apostles in prayer to the Father, before He went to Gethsemane to pray for strength to deliver Himself to His enemies. And thus He began and ended His public ministry with prayer.

That was His last intercession for His Church; and abounds, like all His teachings, in both prophecies and instruction. And He was probably offering it at the time when Judas was with the Rulers of the Jews, preparing to conduct the officers to arrest Him.

That Jesus prayed at all is proof that He is the Son of Man; while the nature of His prayers show that they could have

been framed by none but the Son of God. They testify to His Divinity as strongly as His Doctrines and Miracles; so that at all times, in all His words and works, He continually appears in the double aspect of the God-Man, and as no other man ever appeared. Before calling His Apostles, He passed the night alone in prayer; and now, about to leave them, His last act was praying with, and for, them. In Gethsemane He prayed for Himself; on the Cross, for His enemies; and He breathed out His soul, commending His departing spirit to the Father.

“And He lifted up His eyes to Heaven and said, Father, the hour is come”—the hour to deliver Himself to His enemies—ready and willing to be sacrificed as the Lamb of God. In His eternal High-Priesthood, He offered Himself to the Father, the work given Him to do, all done but the final sacrifice; and He prayed, “Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory I had with Thee before the world was.”

Had He returned to Heaven in only the one nature of God, in which He came down, the prayer would be meaningless; but did He take up His human nature to be glorified with it, then the prayer is evidence that God and man are inseparably united in Him. And it is one of the most convincing proofs that He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Mighty God, the Saviour, who, as St. Augustin said, “So came into this world as never to leave the Father, and so went to the Father as never to leave this world.”

He said He had manifested the Father’s name to His disciples, given them the words He had given Him, and prayed that He would keep them when He left the world, and sanctify them through His truth. By not praying for the world He meant only the reprobate; while the eternal life the Father had given Him, and He had given His disciples—who know the only true God and the Christ Whom He sent—is an eternal life, to be lived in His kingdom in Heaven; which shows the Father’s co-operation in His work of Redemption. He had taken His dis-

ciples out of the world and made them know the Father's love; and He was glorified in them, because "all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine"—so also would all be who should believe on Him through their word.

And again He said, "Now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee," for the disciples are to remain. He knew how forlorn they will be in the little time of His absence, and how persecuted they will be to their lives' ends; and so He adds this marvellous petition, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me (it includes all the whole Church) that they may be one, as We are One"—of one mind and will with them, for this is the result of Christ's righteousness, the fruit of man's regeneration and sanctification through the Holy Spirit.

And we learn from this prayer, that He had kept in His Name all whom God the Father had given Him, and none is lost but the Son of Perdition, Judas; and he, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, that Christ should have a betrayer in one of His own Apostles. Not that He or the Father willed it, but because Judas fitted himself for the predicted office. And from His address, "Holy Father," He gave His disciples a form, through which He offered His most earnest supplication for the unity of His Church; and all Christians are sanctified by God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

But this prayer does not imply that He did not know the divisions which would follow, and the dissensions His religion would make in the world, or that the prayer would not be answered; it was a prayer for the faithful, that they might continue in that spiritual relation of unity of mind and will, under the tribulation which awaited them, that He enjoyed in His tribulation—in doing the Father's will.

The next petition reveals the reason of Christ's desire for the unity of His Church, "That the world may believe that

thou hast seen Me." The desire that His Church might be joined to Him, the Head in the unity of the faith, and ministry, and worship He gave it; and had it remained so, how different would be the aspect of the religious world and its literature. Schism would not exist, nor Christendom be an arena of conflicting religious opinions; and heathen, as well as unbelievers in Christian lands, pointing to them as evidences that Christianity is a failure; and cultivated Pagans telling missionaries to settle their own disputes, before they come to convert them. These divisions are the chief causes of all the unbelief of the masses in Christendom; the uninstructed believe—that any religion which recognizes Christ as the Divine person, and any ministry which professes to teach Christ, and any way men may choose to worship Him, is just as good as His one way, He prayed so earnestly to have maintained.

But this is impossible, from what followed in the prayer respecting His Church, "The glory Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are One;" that through the spirit we may be made one with Him, as the God-Man, as He is One with the Father; and He said, "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in One." It is this which makes the Communion of Saints, of which Christ is the Head; and so St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." And He repeats the reason for this petition, "That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me;" that is, that all in this communion may have the assurance that they are loved of God the Father, for Christ's sake, and their salvation through Him is sure; and thrice He used that word One, that the world might believe.

But now a thousand centers claim the oneness in a wrangling Christendom, and the world is running into unbelief and ungodliness. One Center would make Christ's Church a uni-

versal kingdom such as the world never saw, and enable it to concentrate all its power in breaking up heathendom, and preparing the way to hail Him with joy at His second advent; and that was the reason for this last prayer with His disciples, and for His Church. He foresaw the unity would be broken, and so prayed the more earnestly that in all future times His will might be known, and men should have no excuse for rending it. And He knew the prayer will be answered, not on earth, but by the unity in the millions in Paradise, who are one with the faithful on earth; and it will be perfected after the resurrection in Heaven, with the next petition of the prayer:

“Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am”—be with Him eternally. He can endure man’s unbelief, and self-will, and self-sufficiency until then; and so must we be patient under it, and watch and pray, and so do our work that we may at last be of that blessed company. And there behold, aye more, be partakers of that glory the Father gave Him before the world was; and there forever enjoy that greatest gift of God, “that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

IN GETHSEMANE.

When our Lord and the Apostles had sung an hymn, they went from Jerusalem to the Garden of Gethsemane—at the foot of the Mount of Olives, about half a mile from the city—where they often resorted, which was well known to Judas. And when they came to the place, He said to the Apostles, “Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder;” and He took Peter, and James, and John, as witnesses of His humiliation, as they had been of His Transfiguration. And He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with Me. The watching was for the coming of Judas and the officers. And He went a little from them, and fell on His face

and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it be possible—all things are possible to Thee—let this cup pass from Me;" the cup was not death that He feared, for He had foretold that without regret; but it was all that was involved in it—the betrayal, desertion, and denial by those He most loved on earth, and chiefly the anguish of bearing the whole world's sins. The prostration was an act of the deepest humiliation and supplication, and the beginning of the bearing in His body the sins of all mankind. It was the struggle of His human will against His Divine will, as He was offering Himself as ready for the sacrifice; one hour He suffered the anguish, and His human will endured it; and He said, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Then He returned to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said, "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" The interrogative and emphatic "what," to remind Peter of His recent boast of being ready to follow Him to death. Again He charged them to watch and pray, lest they be led into temptation; and went away a second time.

And He prayed, saying, "O Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." The first hour's prayer had wrought some change in His will, and was tending to harmony with His Divine will; but the great struggle was to come. He returned to the Disciples and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. And He excused their want of sympathy, because the foretelling His speedy death had made them sorrowful. For twenty-four hours they had been hiding in terror from the Jews; and now, at midnight, in the solitude of the mountain, they were heavy with sleep. How this incident confirms the truth of the whole narrative.

And He went away the third time and prayed, saying the same words; and then, knowing that Judas and His band were approaching, He made the final surrender of His will causing such excruciating agony that He sweat, as it were great drops

of blood falling to the ground. And as His will triumphed, His prayer was answered, an angel came and strengthened Him; and returning He found the Disciples asleep again, and said, "Why sleep ye, rise and pray lest ye enter into temptation." And while He spake, Judas and the officers approached.

From this prayer we see how God can answer a prayer, impossible to grant as it is asked, and yet without changing His purpose; and in a way best for Christ, best for God, and best for our salvation. St. Paul said, "Christ offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared,"—which was the struggle of His human will against the anguish of the world's sin to be laid on Him. The angels strengthened Him, and His fear vanished; and He never flinched under the arrest, insults, unjust condemnation, scourging, or the agony of His crucifixion; for when His human soul felt the death agony, He only asked why God had deserted Him.

Some men say Nature's laws are unchangable, and it is useless to pray to alter them; yet Christ without prayer stilled the winds and waves, and made water turn into wine, and the dead come to life; and men now interrupt or modify natural laws, convert water to force, divert the lightning from its natural course, make electricity act against its ordinary laws. And God, who created the universe, can far more easily stop the motion of the solar system, or the revolution of a planet, without disturbing its order, than a mechanic who makes a watch, or engine, or battery, can stop its action without injuring it. And the power, by which God interrupts natural laws, may be by a higher law of the supernatural world, of which we know nothing.

Prayer is a discipline—it does not change God's mind, but brings guidance from Him. Once David prayed to God, to tell him if the Men of Keilah would deliver him to Saul. And He

answered, yes; but David departed and saved his life; and there is no answer promised except to faith, and offered in Christ's name. We pray for prosperity, and adversity comes; for removal of troubles, or deliverance from temptations, and they increase. We ask for restoration of children or relatives from sickness, and they die; but God's way is best—disciplines us into Christ's likeness, removes children from evils to come, or friends to a better life, and makes all to help our sanctification. He withholds in love what we ask for, and sends what He knows is better for us; and what we shall eternally thank Him for in the life to come. Even in this life we often find what we mourned over at the time, was a blessing in disguise; and that our hardest trials have been our richest means of grace.

It is the triumph of faith to submit to God's will in adversity; to trust in Him when all earthly trusts fail us; and keep on praying, as our Lord did, when the shadows of death encompass us. Because, in this way our life is made like Christ's; and when we can pray in the darkest hours of distress, as He did, "Thy will be done," we have become so far Christ-like, or true Christians, that we are fitted for the employments and enjoyments of the Saints in Paradise, where He went when He overcame the sharpness of death. Such is the blessed lesson we learn from our Saviour's example—which is largely confirmed by our own experience—of the blessed fruits of earnest, persevering prayer, offered to our Heavenly Father, in our dear Lord's Name.





CHAPTER XLI.

CHRIST'S ARREST AND TRIAL.

When our Lord returned the third time, and found the Apostles asleep, He said, "Why sleep ye? Arise, let us go, behold, he is at hand who betrayeth Me"—a caution against the cowardice and want of sympathy they were about to manifest towards Him.

And lo! while He was speaking, Judas came with a band of officers—armed with swords, and clubs, and lanterns—to arrest the meekest and holiest Man who ever lived; Judas had given the officers the sign that, Whosoever he kissed, Him they must take and lead away safely. And he went to Christ and said, "Hail Master," and kissed Him; and He said, "Friend, wherefore art thou come? Betrayest thou the Son of Man, with a kiss?" Judas had seen Christ often save Himself from His enemies, and doubtless expected He would do so then; and that he would earn his bribe money, and cheat the rulers. But Peter drew his sword and asked, "Lord, shall we smite?" And without waiting an answer, he cut off the right ear of Malchus, a servant of the High Priest; but Christ said to him, "Put up thy sword; all they who take the sword shall perish with the sword. The cup My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it? How, then, shall the Scripture be fulfilled that thus it must be? Think-

est thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" More than a legion of defending angels for each helpless Apostle. And, undisturbed by the mob, and confusion, and His arrest, He touched Malchus' ear and restored it; otherwise, it would have been evidence in the Council that He and the disciples were dangerous enemies of society.

Christ then said to the officers, "Whom seek ye?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth;" and He said, "I am He." And they went backward and fell to the ground; and by this miracle He showed them they had no power to arrest Him, except by His will. And He said to them, "Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves to take Me? I sat daily with you in the Temple teaching, and ye laid no hold on Me."

And again He asked, "Whom seek ye?" And they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth;" and He said, "I have told you I am He. If, therefore, ye seek Me, let these go their way;" that His words might be verified, "Of them which Thou gavest Me, have I lost none but the Son of Perdition." And Christ said, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness; but the Scripture must be fulfilled." Then laid they their hands on Him, and bound Him with cords; seeing this, the Apostles all forsook Him and fled. And two prophecies of that event were fulfilled—His enemies had stumbled and fallen; and His friends forsaken Him and fled.

The officers led Him first to Annas' house, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, whom the Rulers held as the lawful High Priest; and as they went, passing a young man with a linen cloth about his naked body, they laid hold of him; and he escaped from the cloth, and fled from them naked.

This fulfilled a remarkable type of the Jewish day of atonement, when the High Priest presented two goats before the Lord, at the door of the Tabernacle; and cast lots, one for the

Lord, and the other for the scape-goat. Thus minutely did Christ show to the Jews—and to the Gentile world ever since—that He was the true Pascal Lamb of God, foretold by all the prophets since the world began.

Because the escape-goat into the wilderness signified that Christ's atonement was for the sins of the Gentile world, as well as the Jews. The blood of the goat of the sin offering was carried within the veil, and sprinkled before the Mercy Seat, to make an atonement for the Holy Place, and for the transgressions and sins of the people; this fulfilled type, as Christ was being led to the Council to be condemned to death, was another proof to the Jews of His Messiahship. He was taken to Annas first, to get his approval of the arrest, but no examination was held there; but he sent Christ bound to Caiaphas, that he might order His trial and condemnation—because the Roman Governor would approve and execute his sentence.

It was past midnight before Christ was led to Caiaphas, where the Council had assembled and the pretence of a trial began. But it was the mockery of a Hebrew judicial trial, without either its form or fairness; because it required the accused to have his crime stated, to be confronted with his accusers—not to be tried for his life hurriedly or in the night, and not to be condemned except on the testimony of two witnesses, and never on his own testimony; and all these conditions were violated.

St. John recovered from his alarm and flight, had returned and followed Christ to the Hall of Judgment; he knew, also, that Peter was at the door, and he went out to bring him in. And a woman at the door said to him, as he was entering, "Art not thou, also, one of this Man's disciples?" And he said, "I am not."

Meanwhile, the High Priest asked Christ of His disciples and doctrines. And Jesus, claiming His legal rights, replied, "I ever spake openly in the Synagogue and Temple, whither the

Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing." This was a protest against the illegal proceeding, and a claim of His right, according to the law, to be informed of His accusation, and confronted by witnesses. And He said, "Ask those who heard Me, what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I have said." These words evince conscious innocence of any crime; they were dignified and respectful, and He knew that the Rulers had heard His discourses in the Temple.

"When He had thus spoken, one of the officers present struck Him with the palm of his hand, saying, 'Answerest Thou the High Priest so?'" This indignity by a court-menial was not rebuked by the Judge, and Jesus saw what kind of justice was to be expected from his decision.

Meanwhile, the servants had kindled a fire, and Peter stood and warmed himself; and they said to him, "Art not thou also one of His disciples?" And He said, "I am not."

The Council sought false witnesses against Christ, to give the semblance of a fair trial; but the object was to make testimony to put Him to death. But it found none; though many testified, their testimony did not agree. But certain false witnesses said, "We heard Him say, I will destroy this Temple made with hands, and in three days will build another made without hands." This was to prove Christ an incendiary, or profane person, who would destroy God's temple; but the witnesses did not agree. Thus far, there was a pretence of justice; and, as the testimony was insufficient to convict Him, He was legally entitled to be set at liberty. Christ was silent, during these proceedings; He would take no part, because they were illegal.

It then looked to the High Priest as if the Council would fail to find any cause to condemn Him; and he said to Jesus, "Answerest Thou nothing? What is it these witness against Thee?" But Jesus kept silence. Then the High Priest said to Him, "I abjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us

whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God?" This was putting Him on His oath, as was customary then to let a criminal testify for himself.

The High Priest knew that Jesus claimed to be the Christ, and supposed He would then admit it; and he had refrained from putting this question, until he saw his first effort to convict had failed; and he showed his confidence in Christ's truthfulness, believing He would not deny it. Here, again, it was the Court's duty to bring witnesses that He claimed to be the Christ.

But He made it needless, saying, "If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I also ask you, ye will not let Me go;" but saying "Thou hast said," was assent, I am, as you say, the Christ, the Son of the living God, and "hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of Heaven." Then the High Priest rent his clothes, signifying that Christ had spoken blasphemy; and said, "What need we further witness, ye have heard out of His own mouth; what think ye?" And they answered, "He is guilty of death." Then followed the scene which set law and justice at defiance: "They spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and smote Him with the palms of their hands."

Had Christ been guilty of blasphemy, that was treason against the Theocracy, and He would have been justly condemned; but so far from that, He asserted the truth of His Divine character and office, and was unjustly condemned. This settled the matter of His death, so far as the Sanhedrim had the power. But the Romans had deprived it of authority to execute the condemned; and the whole multitude arose and led Jesus to Pilate.

An hour had now passed since Peter had a second time denied the Lord; and apparently just before the departure from the Sanhedrim, another woman confidently affirmed, "This fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean, and his speech agreeth thereto;" and Peter began to curse and swear, "I know not

what thou sayest." And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew; and the Lord turned and looked on Peter. And he remembered the words of the Lord, how He said, "Before the cock crew twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice;" and He went out and wept bitterly.

The Divine compassion in the Lord's look, melted Peter's heart. But while he wept for his unworthiness, he was confirmed in his faith and love of Christ, and was ever more faithful unto death—more devoted, and willing to bear His cross than he would have been, but for His terrible fall and merciful forgiveness.

As one Apostle, Judas, had his special work to betray Christ; so had Peter his, to deny Him—to teach His disciples another lesson, the power of faith. Judas' faith failed, and he was lost; Christ prayed that Peter's might not fail, and it did not; and he was saved, though his guilt was apparently as great as Judas'. And it has been a consolation to Christians ever since; and without this example of Christ's great forgiveness at such a time, and under such circumstances, we should not have known how far reaching His love and mercy are; and there are but few Christians who would not, sometimes, despair of the forgiveness of their sins.

Now the scene had changed, and Christ is arraigned before Pontius Pilate. The Rulers of the Jews, in their rage and haste, assembled a midnight Council, and made themselves unimpeachable witnesses for Christ; and were doing His will in hastening His trial, that He might also be arraigned before the Roman Governor, to have their sentence confirmed, and His crucifixion accomplished—so that He would die at the exact hour when the last Pascal Lamb was killed, and forever abolish the Passover.

Pilate was appointed Procurator of Judea, A. D. 27, by Tiberius, and he had resided at Jerusalem; and though he cared but little for the Jews, he must have heard of Christ's miracles

and doctrines, and it is evident he desired to save Him from His enemies.

There was really no trial of Christ before Pilate, according to Roman judicial forms; the Rulers of the Jews led Jesus there for Pilate to confirm their sentence, and to order His crucifixion. And Pilate declared that their demand was unreasonable; he knew the sentence of the Council was illegal, and he determined not to confirm it, but to release Him. His conduct towards the Jews was commonly arbitrary; and he did not care to please them, as his efforts to release Christ proved.

The Chief Priests and Elders accompanied Christ to the Roman Court, but they would not go in—lest they should be defiled, and could not eat the Passover. When Jesus came before Pilate, he put himself in the place of a judge—by asking the witnesses, “What accusation bring ye against this Man?” And the Jews avoided a direct answer to his question, saying, “If He were not a malefactor, we would not have brought Him to you.” They said, “He is a pestilent fellow, stirring up all Jewry—beginning at Galilee, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying Himself is a King.”

The condemnation of Christ by the Council was for blasphemy, a theocratic crime; but the Rulers knew that was no violation of the Roman Law. So they made a new accusation before Pilate, and demanded sentence for a political crime—for refusing tribute to Cæsar, and making Himself a King; the charge was partly true, and partly false—wholly false in the view in which it was made—and that prevented agreement in the witnesses. And here, again, because the proceeding was unjust, Christ said nothing, and made no plea or defence; He knew they were making testimony to prove, to future ages, what they denied, that He is the Christ.

Pilate listened to the accusation, and then said to Christ, “Behold how many things they witness against Thee; answerest

Thou nothing?" This was to put the burden of defence on Christ, and was illegal; and He made no reply, and Pilate marveled at His patient silence.

Meanwhile a new witness for Christ's innocence appeared, which increased Pilate's desire to release Him; his wife sent to him, on the Judgment Seat, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that Just Man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream, because of Him:" then Pilate went out to the Rulers of the Jews, and said, "Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your Law; for I find no fault in Him."

This was pronouncing Him innocent, and it was his duty to release Him; but the Jews answered, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death;" for God had so ordered it that they could not—that the prophecies concerning His death by crucifixion, and not by stoning as the Jewish law required, might be fulfilled.

The evasion and persistency of the Jews, appears to have angered Pilate; and returning to the Judgment Seat, he asked Christ, "Art Thou the king of the Jews?" And He answered, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?" This was admitting it; yes, it is so. Pilate again asked, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the Chief Priests have delivered Thee unto me; what hast Thou done?" This, again, put Christ on His defence, and He answered:

"My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world, then should My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence." This was a denial of the accusation of the Jews—that He was a political revolutionist, or had any designs of establishing a kingdom opposed to Cæsar's, which was one of the greatest crimes known in Roman Law.

Pilate again asked, "Art Thou a king, then?" And He answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king! To this end was I

born; and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one who is of the truth heareth My voice." This was equivalent to saying, "If you ask in a political sense—No, I am no king; but if you ask respecting my inheritance, nature, and mission—Yes, I am a king.

And Pilate asked, "What is truth?" not in a jesting spirit, as Lord Bacon supposed, but with a real desire to know; because it was one of the great questions that occupied the discussions of the learned men of that age. And the Academicians taught that "probability, and the resemblance of truth, is the utmost men can attain;" and Cicero said, "There is no subject on which learned men differ so strenuously as on the nature of truth." No wonder, then, if Pilate believed Christ a Prophet of the true God, that he asked, desiring to know how He would define it.

Our Lord had really anticipated and answered Pilate's question, before it was asked, by the saying, "Every one who is of Truth heareth My voice;" that is, every one who is of God, who believes in the true God, and the revelation He has made, will believe in Me.

The Psalmist said, "The Lord is the God of Truth:" all that God is in and of Himself, is Truth; all He revealed through the Prophets and Christ, is Truth; Jesus Christ is Truth, as God; all He spake was Truth, the words which the Father taught Him, and so were infallible Truth. St. John says, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;" He is the only Man who ever lived and never misrepresented, or told a lie; "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." Christ, therefore, stood before Pilate as the embodiment of Truth—the true God—and there was a profound meaning in His words, "Every one who is of the Truth heareth My voice." And thus He testified in Pilate's Court, exactly as He declared Himself before the Jewish Council—that He is God, the Son of the one, only living, and true God; and this was His good confession before Pontius Pi-

late; and it was a climax to the testimony of His enemies, the Pharisees—who publicly declared in the Temple, “We know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth.” Though they confessed it with an evil intent, yet it was believed by all who knew Him.

When Pilate heard that, he went out to the Chief Priests and Elders, and said, “I find no fault in Him;” thus declaring Him innocent of the accusations a second time, and pronouncing Him not guilty. “But,” said he, “you have a custom that I release one prisoner unto you at the Passover; will ye, therefore, that I release unto you the King of the Jews?” because he knew that for envy, they had brought Him to be condemned. And there was sarcasm, if not jesting, in Pilate’s question—calling Christ the King of the Jews, when they were publicly rejecting Him.

It looks as if all Pilate’s sympathies were with Christ, and he had about decided to release Him, in spite of the sentence of the Sanhedrim. But, meanwhile, recollecting that He had been spoken of as a Galilean—which Province was under Herod’s jurisdiction, and He was then in Jerusalem, hoping to escape the responsibility of either releasing or condemning Him—he sent Him to Herod, who had long wished to see Him, and hoped to witness some miracle done by Him; the Chief Priests and Scribes went also, and violently accused Him. And Herod asked Him many questions, and He answered none; and Herod and his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate, arrayed as King of the Jews.

Pilate then went again to the Jews, and said, “You have brought this Man unto me, as one Who perverteth the people, and behold I have examined Him before you, and find no fault in Him, touching those things whereof ye accuse Him; no, nor yet Herod, for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto Him. I will, therefore, chastise and release

Him." Pilate declared their accusation not proven. That was his verdict. But he reminded the Jews of the custom of releasing a criminal at the Passover, and proposed to let Christ go, offering to scourge Him—hoping to appease the Jews, and save Christ's life. But he knew not the extent of their malignity, nor that God was permitting their wickedness to fill up its measure, by causing the death of His Incarnate Son; and that He might accomplish His mission in dying for the sins of the world.

But they cried out, "Not this Man, but Barabbas," who had committed murder in an insurrection; and for Christ, they said, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." But Pilate was yet determined to release Him, and He delighted in tyranny over the Jews; and a third time he demanded, "What evil hath He done? I have found no cause of death in Him." Pilate had showed increasing courage after Christ's return from Herod; and he again said, "I will, therefore, chastise Him and let Him go."

The Jews, seeing Pilate's firmness, were alarmed; and answered, "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die; because He made Himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard that, he was more afraid; and went again into the Judgment Hall, and saith unto Jesus, "Where art Thou?" But He gave him no answer. And here again was fulfilled the prophecy—first before the Jewish Court, then before Herod, and now before Pilate, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before his shearers is dumb, so opened He not His mouth." Who, but God, could have maintained silence under such indignities? Or who, but the Christ, the Son of God, could have so fulfilled the prophecy?

Then Pilate said to Christ, "Speakest Thou not unto me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and power to release Thee?" Jesus then broke His silence, saying, "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above; therefore, he who delivered Me unto

thee hath the greater sin." This shows how calm and cool Jesus was; how He saw through all the scenes going on; and how, in His own extremity, He exercised that Divine courtesy to withhold the names of Judas and Caiaphas; and it was also consideration for Pilate, because of his efforts to release Him.

Pilate thenceforth sought to rescue Christ from the Jews; and seeing this, they seized on a last resort to compel Pilate to deliver Him to be crucified. They knew their man, and his weakness; and how to excite his fear and selfishness, and compel him to yield to their demand: "And they cried out, If thou let this Man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar."

The Jews here shifted their accusation from the theological crime of blasphemy, to the political crime of conspiring against Cæsar; and in this, Pilate was officially and personally involved. His moral courage weakened, his Governorship was endangered, and they carried their point against his determination, though the accusation was false; because Christ publicly taught to pay tribute and honor to Cæsar.

And Pilate brought Jesus forth, and sat down on the Judgment Seat, and said to the Jews, "Behold your king!" There was both anger and sarcasm in his words, because the Jews had overreached him, and he saw himself powerless against their plotting; and he said this, as most insulting to them.

The Jews cried, "Away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him." Pilate said unto them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The Chief Priests answered, "We have no king but Cæsar." And Pilate, seeing he could prevail nothing, but rather a tumult was made, took water and washed his hands before the multitude—as if washing his hands would cleanse him for violating his conscience—saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this Just Person. See ye to it." Thus the Jews, Christ's foes, forced this Roman Ruler into the position where he was made an unimpeach-

able witness for both Christ's innocence, and His royalty as the King of the Jews.

But the multitude answered, "His blood be on us, and on our children." This did not relieve Pilate of his responsibility; it was his duty to preserve peace, but he had no right to do it by illegal or unjust means. But he released Barabbas unto them, and when Christ had been scourged he delivered Him to be crucified. The scourging was a usual preliminary before the crucifixion of great criminals; and no indignity was spared Jesus, which the half barbarous Roman customs allowed. But He patiently and uncomplainingly endured the indignity and suffering, "dumb before His shearers." But no power of man could stay the will of God, and His Christ; He had come to do the Father's will, and fulfill His promise and revelation to man. And His crucifixion was essential to fulfill the prophecies, and finish His mission.

Meanwhile, another scene was being enacted in the Temple, almost as wonderful as the unjust trials before Caiaphas, and Herod, and Pilate; and is as memorable in the world's history, and the best testimony to the Divinity and innocence of Christ, furnished on that remarkable day—which was, the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Psalmist, that one of His disciples should sell Him for the price of a slave, and die a mysterious death, and leave his office vacant. Probably, at the time of the morning sacrifice, as soon as Judas heard that the Sanhedrim had condemned Jesus to death, he brought the money to the Chief Priests and Elders, and confessed, "I have betrayed the innocent blood;" and he sealed the confession by his tragical death—"went out and hanged himself"—probably from some high place, and the rope broke—as St. Peter says, he "fell head-long, and all his bowels gushed out." Judas knew Christ intimately, saw Him in His most unreserved moments, and He could have no better witness; and God caused this wicked man's testimony,

to be engraven into the earth, to serve as a perpetual memorial of His Son's Divinity and innocence. The Chief Priests took the money, and bought the Potter's Field to bury strangers in; and many years after, St. Matthew said, "It is called the Field of Blood to this day." And all such cemeteries are now called Potter's Fields.

No human mind can imagine any better way in which God or man could have accumulated more satisfactory testimony to prove Christ the Son of God, the Messiah of the Jews, and the Saviour of the world. For here was Christ's solemn declaration, under oath, that He is the Son of God; and the testimony of the Chief Priests and Elders to Pilate, that He ought to die because He made Himself the Son of God. And the fact that when they found Pilate would not condemn Him, on that accusation—after he had three times declared, "I find no fault in Him," and was determined to let Him go—they changed it to a political one which induced Pilate to deliver Him to be crucified. And, finally, Judas testified to Christ's innocence, and sealed it with his suicide. All these are well known historical persons, known to be contemporaries at the time and place where they figured, and also that all of them had the very characteristics by which they are represented in the Gospel; and unitedly they concur to prove that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and the Saviour promised in the seed of the woman.

Then Pilate scourged Jesus and delivered Him to the soldiers, and they led Him away to the Hall, called Pretorium, and put a crown of thorns on His head, and a purple robe on Him, inaugurating Him as king of the Gentile world—for they were Gentiles who did it; but they saluted Him, "Hail, King of the Jews." And they smote Him on the head with a reed, and spit upon Him. And when they had mocked Him, they took off the purple robe from Him, and put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him." This was the beginning

of Christ's coronation as King, of both the Jews and the Gentile world.

These trials were both unjust and unfair; Christ suffered on two different charges. The Sanhedrim condemned Him unjustly for blasphemy; and Pilate unjustly, because the Jews accused Him as an enemy to Cæsar—which, when Pilate examined Him, he said was not proven; because Christ confessed that His kingdom was not of this world. And Christ was unjustly condemned, both by Hebrew and Roman law, as no sentence of death could be justly passed until the accused had his accusers face to face, and two, at least, agreed in their testimony as to His guilt.





CHAPTER XLII

THE CRUCIFIXION.

Crucifixion was by binding, or nailing, the person to transverse pieces of wood, called a cross; it was a painful and lingering death, applied chiefly to slaves and great criminals, and regarded as the greatest dishonor by a Roman citizen or freedman.

The cross is probably the oldest instrument of punishment, and oldest emblem of suffering love; its origin is unknown, but it was associated with the first sacrifice ever offered to God, and the first blood ever shed on earth, and has always been the symbol of suffering. And the universal custom of sacrifice among ancient nations, shows the universal belief of mankind, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins;" and all sacrifice looked forward by faith to the coming of the Lamb of God, through whom the forgiveness of sin was obtained.

And it is one of the wonders of creation, that there is visible in the Southern hemisphere the magnificent constellation of the Southern Cross; which looks as if God hung it up there as a symbol of man's future redemption, and a token of His Divine love, and the suffering He would endure in a human nature for the world's salvation, and as the means by which He would save man from the sin and death Satan introduced here.

The first revelation of a suffering Saviour was, that Satan should bruise the heel of the woman's seed; and the first intimation that the suffering would be by the cross, was in the institution of Sacrifice for the remission of sins. The dead body of the lamb represented the crucifix, and its anatomy with out-stretched arms was the cross, and the flesh and blood were symbols of the body and blood of the Lamb of God.

The first cross mentioned in the Bible, is that God told Moses to set up in the wilderness, on which was lifted up the brazen serpent; and when persons bitten by the venomous reptiles looked on it, they were saved alive. We know what this meant; because Christ said to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This interpreted the promise of God, of a Saviour in the seed of the woman, who would bruise Satan's head; and the cross was always before the eyes of the Israelites, in the preparation of the Pascal Lamb, stretched on two sticks, and of the suffering to follow by being roasted whole by fire; which was a type of the Incarnate Son of God, the Lamb of God, suffering in man's nature, to take away the sin and death man had brought into this world, and save him from the unquenchable fire.

Our Lord used the cross to express self-denial, self-renunciation, and self-sacrificing love and obedience: "Whosoever will come after Me, let him take up his cross daily and follow Me." And ever since His crucifixion, it has been the symbol of His love unto death for us men, and our only hope of salvation; and there has been no time since when the blotting out of this faith and hope, would not have filled the world with despair.

It was the impotence of man's nature to restore itself from the ruin Satan and sin caused, which rendered a superhuman Saviour essential; and it is the potency of the Son of God in

a perfect human nature—without sin—as the God-Man, that made His sacrifice all-sufficient for the sins of the whole world.

“After they had mocked Christ, they took the robe off from Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.” Two malefactors went with Him to a place called Golgotha. And as they came out of the city they met a man of Cyrene, named Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus; his birth place and parent’s names show that he was a Gentile, and they compel him to bear Christ’s cross. And there followed Him a great company of men and women, who bewailed and lamented Him; and to them He spake the only words He is said to have spoken on His way to Calvary: “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but for yourselves and your children. For, behold, the days are coming in the which ye shall say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck.’ Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, fall on us, and to the hills, cover us; for if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry tree?”

There was before the Saviour’s mind, sorrows of others greater than His own, the future judgment which His crucifixion would bring on the city and its inhabitants; if such suffering was coming on Him as the innocent Son of Man, the green tree, what shall be the end of the ungodly nation, the dry-dead tree, that caused it?

It was no chance act which brought Simon to meet the procession that was leading Jesus to Crucifixion—nor was the cross laid on Simon because Christ was unable to bear it; but it was a renewal of the type of the scape-goat going with the Lamb of God to be offered in sacrifice as an atonement for the sins of the world. The first young man, who fled naked, was a Jew—the scape-goat of that nation; this Simon was an old man, representing the older Gentile nations. So the type was doubly fulfilled; and the particularity in giving the names helps to prove

the authenticity and genuineness of the narrative, and would have led to its rejection had no such persons existed. Simon was released when they arrived at Calvary.

Then the soldiers offered Jesus wine mingled with myrrh, before they began to nail Him to the cross, as an opiate to mitigate His sufferings; but He declined it. It was the cup the Father had appointed Him to drink, and He drained it to its dregs. This act accords with all the superhuman self-denial and self-renunciation of His whole life.

All the Evangelists are silent respecting that awful scene of nailing the Saviour to the cross; its remembrance was, probably, too painful for them to dwell upon or relate. But it was, evidently, while the iron was entering into His soul, that He spake the first of the seven sayings on the cross:

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Thus Christ fulfilled the prophecy that He would make intercession for the transgressors, and obeyed His own commandment to forgive His enemies and pray for them in that hour of inexpressible anguish of His own soul. He was numbered with transgressors, two malefactors being crucified with Him, one on His right hand, and one on the left. And Pilate put the inscription over His head, in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew—the three languages most in use among the Jews and Gentiles in Palestine:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS.

When the Chief Priests and Scribes saw it, they asked Pilate to change it to, “He said I am king of the Jews;” but he replied, “What I have written, I have written;” meaning, it shall stand as it is; and it looks as if he insisted on the inscription from a belief in its truth, and as the only reparation he could make for his crime in delivering Him to be crucified, when he declared Him innocent, and as the only means by which he could annoy them for compelling him to do it.

Now there stood by the cross Jesus' mother, and Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene; and He spake His second saying on the cross, when He saw His mother and St. John standing near her, "Woman, behold thy Son;" and to St. John, "Behold thy mother;" and from that hour he took her to his own home. All Jesus had on the earth He created—and was then dying to redeem—was His earthly Mother, and the few garments that the soldiers were dividing among themselves; which were—an outer garment like a toga, an inner jacket, trowsers, a loose garment falling to the ankles, an Oriental turban, and sandals. The soldiers made four parts, and divided all except the seamless jacket among themselves, casting lots for that; and literally fulfilling the prophecy, "They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots." This, the Roman soldiers did.

The people looked in wonder on this painful spectacle; and the Chief Priests and Scribes derided His suffering, saying, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save; let Him save Himself if He be the Christ, the chosen of God. "Others passed by, railing and wagging their heads, saying, "Ah! Thou Who destroyest the Temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself and come down from the Cross." "Let Christ, the King of the Jews, descend from the cross, that we may see and believe."

Thus the Chief Priests and Scribes, witnessed before Christ and the multitude, that He who was dying on the cross had saved the life of others; they knew of the raising from the dead of Jairus' daughter, and the widow of Nain's son, and Lazarus; and yet were so blind and hardened that they did not see that they were making irrefutable testimony to live to the world's end—that Jesus Christ was the King of the Jews, the Messiah, the chosen of God, the long-expected Saviour. The soldiers, also, who crucified Him, mocked Him—offering Him vinegar to drink, and saying, "If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself."

Then another remarkable witness appeared. The two malefactors who were crucified with Christ appear to have railed on Him at first; but when one of them heard Him pray to the Father to forgive His murderers, and saw His patient suffering—and possibly awed, also, by the convulsion of the earth, and the darkening of the Sun—he believed Him to be the Christ, whom the Chief Priests were rejecting; and he rebuked the other hardened wretch, saying, “Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we, justly; for we receive the reward of our deeds; but this Man hath done nothing amiss.” This was a profession of his faith in Christ, and a confession of his sins; and bearing witness to Christ’s innocence as Man, he acknowledged Him to be the Lord, and prayed to Him, “Lord, remember me, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.” And this caused Christ’s third saying, “Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt Thou be with Me in Paradise.” It was the sixth hour, or noon, and He died at the ninth hour, and the change of worlds was sudden; the man was a sinner, but faith in Christ’s blood, then shedding, cleansed him. St. John’s account seems contradictory, representing Christ before Pilate at the sixth hour; but he agrees exactly with the other Evangelists, because they reckoned by Jewish, and he by Roman, time.

From that time darkness was over all the land, creation veiling itself before its suffering Creator; the earth was convulsed, and darkened to hide the awful scene from the sight of men, and possibly from the angels. And there is a mysterious connection between sin and darkness of which we know nothing, only St. Paul said, “Evil spirits are the rulers of the Darkness of this world;” and Jesus said, when He delivered Himself to the band, “This is your hour, and the Power of Darkness.” And the Prophet Joel said, “The Sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.”

Revelation mentions a physical and spiritual darkness; one a force in the Natural, and the other in the Spiritual world: and God said, "I form the Light, and I create Darkness." Darkness is not shadow, nor the absence of light, but a subtle force which fills all space with the ether, as oxygen and nitrogen exist in the air; and it was deepened by God, when the Sun-light was obscured.

Our Lord repeatedly said, Satan had a kingdom of Darkness in this world, and is the Prince of this world, but He had come to cast him out; and it was his power let loose on Christ for the last time, after He had hung three hours in darkness, until near the time of the evening sacrifice, when Satan assaulted Him, as the last dregs in His cup of death, to make him feel forsaken by the Father.

Then the horror of the awful darkness of the second death fell on Christ, and He uttered with a loud cry His fourth saying on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me." His human soul was treading the wine-press of God's wrath against the sins of the whole world, alone; and in the very words in which the Psalmist foretold He would express the anguish of His soul, as He drank the last dregs in His cup of suffering, when His soul was made an offering for sin.

It was no forsaking by God, but the beginning of that sinking, death pang which severs the soul from the immortal spirit's union with the mortal body; for only His soul could die. His immortal human spirit could no more die, than His immortal Divine spirit—to which it was inseparably united. In that anguish of soul, as the Son of Man, He touched the deepest depths of human woe; feeling not only the crushing weight of the whole world's sins, but also all the anguish of God's wrath as it will be felt by a lost spirit in Hell—except only its guilt and remorse. And this He did to redeem a fallen world, and that He might suffer the extremest injustice and cruelty ever endured by man

from man on earth, and feel the pangs of a lost spirit in Hell, in our own human nature; that all mankind might know that He will be a merciful Judge, when He comes to judge the world—that He will by His own experience know how to make all allowances for the infirmities of our nature, and so all will be satisfied with His judgment.

At this cry, for it was loud, some one who, probably, remembered Malachi's prophecy—that Elijah would appear before the great and terrible day of the Lord—expected him then to deliver Christ, said, "This Man calleth for Elias;" and he ran and filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink. The rest said, "Let be; let us see if Elias will come to save Him."

Jesus, now knowing that all things were accomplished, that all the prophecies but one were fulfilled, uttered His fifth saying on the cross, "I thirst." Then the Gentile soldiers fulfilled the Psalmist's prediction, "They gave Me gall for My meat, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink;" filling a sponge with vinegar and hyssop, they put it to His mouth, and when He received it He made His sixth saying on the cross, "It is finished." The work He came to do in the flesh, its humiliation and suffering; the life He came to live, manifesting the power and love of the Father; the fulfillment of all the types and prophecies concerning Him; the death He came to die, and the Redemption He came to accomplish, so far as His Messianic office as the Son of Man was concerned, were finished. All sacrifice and all blood shedding for sin, was finished. And then He uttered His seventh and last saying on the cross, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit;" and He bowed His head, gave up His human soul to death, His spirit was released from the body, and the great salvation He came to provide was accomplished.

But death did not take His soul, as it commonly does, irre-

spective of His will; neither the nailing on the cross nor the suffering caused it. But He gave up His life at a particular moment, and in an unusual way for one crucified. He gave it up voluntarily as a free-will offering, crying with a loud voice—showing, that after all He had suffered, His mind was clear, His physical powers were unexhausted—and He bowed His head and gave up His soul-life at the very time the last Pascal Lamb died. The physical cause of His death was, that with that loud cry, His heart was ruptured, and the soul-life was suddenly extinct; and there He hung between Heaven and Earth, lifted up as the victim who had taken the world's sins on Himself, and His human soul was crushed to death by them.

God did not lay this penalty on Christ, as an innocent victim made to suffer for other's sins. Oh! no; but the Father so loved the world, that, through His Son, He took on Himself the world's sins, and caused the world's redemption. St. Paul says, "Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree;" but it was doing the Father's will in which He concurred, and it was God's atonement in our nature which He made because it was impossible for our salvation in any other way; and there was no other way by which He could make us so sensible of His justice, love, and mercy, or to become partakers of His righteousness. As St. Paul says, "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption."

As Christ gave up His soul to death, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain—signifying that the veil between heaven and earth was rent, and that Heavenly world was opened, as it never had been before; that the veil which hung over the Law was removed, the veil of the prophecies concerning Christ was removed; that the old kingdom was rent, and that life and immortality were brought to light in the Gospel; and that the old covenant in the blood of animals and man was abolished, to give place to the new covenant in the blood of Christ. It was an

earthquake which rent the veil, to show it was God's act; and it rent at the same time with the rocks, and opened the graves of some saints.

It had been a burial place, where Jesus was crucified; and some of the graves remained open until Christ's resurrection, and the spirits of the departed appeared to many. Thus our Lord's most remarkable prophecy, and most astounding miracle, were fulfilled and accomplished by the last words He ever spake in the flesh, and as He died on the cross; for He had said to the Apostles, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who hear shall live." These dead arose, not only as witnesses to the truth of Christ's prophecy, and of His resurrection, but also as a proof of the possibility and certainty of a final resurrection of the dead, through Christ who raised them.

When the Captain and the band who assisted at the crucifixion, saw these prodigies of darkness, and earthquake, and rending of the rocks, and opening of the graves—though they saw not the dead, they appeared to Christians in the city—"they feared greatly, saying, truly this was the Son of God." And many women standing afar off, who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him; and among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Salome the mother of S. S. James and John. When the Centurion saw it, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man;" and thus He gave his Gentile testimony to Him as Christ, the God-Man.

"And all the people who came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. And all His acquaintances and the women from Galilee stood afar off, beholding these things." Thus ended the most awful tragedy, and the greatest injustice ever enacted on earth. And it would be a monstrous conclusion, that the Man

whose whole life had been immaculate purity, truth, and righteousness, who condemned lying and hypocrisy, and whose worst enemies publicly confessed, "We know Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man," should have died with untruth on His tongue, when He claimed to be the Son of God and—with the last words He spake on the cross—called God His Father, and commended His spirit to Him.

Self-sacrifice is the greatest love God, or man, can show; and for the greatest sacrifice one born of woman ever did show, Jesus is enthroned in the glory of the Godhead. There is no deeper pleasure our nature is susceptible of, than sacrifices for those we love, or even for others in distress; but God's love is more—while we were enemies, He took our nature to die in it; because in no other way could He show to beings like us the intensity of His love, and His desire for our salvation. And the way men now are slow to believe in His love, and are swift to cavil at it, prove that without some such manifestation of His self-suffering love and mercy, we never should have been convinced of them.

Nothing now remained to fulfill all the prophecies concerning Christ's crucifixion, but the three personal incidents which were to follow it: first, that not a bone of Him should be broken; second, that His body should be pierced by a spear; third, that He should have His burial with the rich.

The Jews, therefore—that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath—begged Pilate that their bones might be broken, and the bodies taken down. The soldiers sent, brake the legs of the two thieves; this was to make sure of their death, and they were yet alive. So Jesus went unaccompanied by the penitent to Paradise, for He died three hours before him; but they met there that day, and the penitent's translation must have been almost instantaneous. But when they came to Jesus,

and saw He was already dead, they brake not His bones; but a soldier pierced His side with a spear, and water and blood flowed out. It was the serum which surrounds the heart; and it was impossible, if life remained, that it did not then become extinct—so sure it is, that He died on the cross.

And St. John, who witnessed the whole scene, said, "His record is true; and He knoweth that He saith truth, that ye might believe." For these things were done that the Scripture might be fulfilled: first, as the type of the Pascal Lamb, whose bones God forbid to be broken; and of the Psalmist's prophecy, that not a bone of Him shall be broken. And the more remarkable prophecy of Zachariah, where God says, foretelling Christ's death, "They shall look upon Me, Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him"—which, in a mysterious way, declared they pierced both God and Man.

When the evening was come, a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea—an honorable counsellor, and disciple of our Lord, who waited for the kingdom of God—went boldly to Pilate and begged His body. Pilate called the Centurion who had charge of the crucifixion, and inquired if He were long dead; and when he knew it certainly, he gave the body to Joseph.

Apparently without concert, Nicodemus, another Ruler of the Jews—for both men belonged to the Sanhedrim, though they did not consent to Christ's death—who was the same man who came to our Lord by night to learn of His doctrines, had prepared an hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. Joseph had brought some fine linen; and together they wrapped the body in the linen, with the spices, after the custom of the Jews, to prepare the rich for burial.

Now, in the place where Jesus was crucified, was a garden; and in the garden, a new sepulchre, cut into the rock, wherein no man had been buried; and there they put His body, and rolled a great stone to its door. As the Seed of the Woman,

He was thus buried in the earth, as a preparation for His resurrection; and His enemies so ordered it, that there never should be any reasonable doubt, but that He was dead, buried, and rose from the dead. It was from a Garden, the first Adam was driven for his sin; and the earth was made to bring forth thorns; and now the second Adam, to remove the curse, had been crowned with thorns; and His dead body was laid to rest in a Garden, while His spirit had gone away to a Heavenly Paradise.

The Chief Priests and Scribes went to Pilate, and said, "Sir, we remember that that Deceiver said, while He was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away; and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first." These very men, who, three days before, testified in the Temple that He taught God's truth, now, after He is dead, accuse Him as a Deceiver; but they also bring to Pilate's notice His prophecy, that, after three days, He would rise again, and asked him to help them prove that the prophecy will not be fulfilled. "Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can." No doubt Pilate was anxious that the prophecy should be fully tested, and to know if it were possible that the Christ, whom the Centurion assured Him was surely dead, would rise again. "So they went (the Centurion and band, which had charge of the crucifixion) and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch." And there were four parties then, who did not believe that Jesus' body would ever live again: His own disciples, the Jews, Pilate, and the Roman soldiers. St. John says, the disciples knew not the Scripture until after the resurrection, that He should rise again; and the Apostle Thomas did not believe it until some days after He had risen. Everything, therefore, tended to con-

firm the doubt, rather than the belief; and this shows, that to this time, not even the Apostles believed, or knew, that Christ was the second person of the God-head, incarnate.

Meanwhile, Mary Magdelene, and Mary the mother of Joses, followed the Lord's body to the tomb, but apparently knew nothing of the preparations made by Joseph and Nicodemus; because when they returned, they prepared spices and ointment, intending to anoint His body after the Sabbath.





CHAPTER XLIII.

CHRIST IN PARADISE.

When God created man, He put him in the Garden called Paradise—His Church, enclosed from the world—where he saw and talked face to face with God, where grew the Tree of Life, and man was to be trained for Heaven; for he was immortal, and might have exchanged worlds without the corruption of his body, had he remained holy. But God knew man would sin, be expelled, and die; and He provided a Heavenly Paradise, where Satan cannot enter, nor man sin, or die, while he is educating for Heaven.

The belief in intermediate abodes for the spirits of men—between Heaven, Earth, Hell—where they wait a resurrection and judgment, is as old as Adam; and men have always been curious to know what awaits them there—as the first revelation was dim, and was preserved only by tradition. Enoch, the fifth from Adam, was translated because he walked with God—and so it must have been to a better world; and Job, Abraham and the Psalmist speak of a better life, and a city of God, and a Hades. Elijah was gloriously translated; and the Chaldeans, Egyptians, and Orientals believed in such worlds; and the Greeks and Romans called the kingdom of the dead, Hades—divided into Elysium for the good, and Tartarus for the wicked.

But it was not until Christ came that the nature of these abodes was revealed: that Hades is the general name for the prison of the righteous and the wicked—one division called Paradise, the other Tartarus; and both knowing what will be their fate when Christ comes to judge them—the righteous growing in righteousness, and the wicked in wickedness and hopeless despair.

Christ told the Jews and His disciples that He would be absent from them three days after His death, but He did not tell them where; but on the cross, He said to the penitent, "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." Friday evening, He was buried; Saturday, He lay in the tomb; Sunday morning, He returned and raised His body. Light and electricity travel thousands of miles a second, and a spirit must exceed it, as we flash thought to the remotest worlds by an impulse of the will. After Christ's resurrection, the disciples learned from Him many things respecting the departed: that death works no change in our consciousness or identity; that the saints are increasing in knowledge, because He preached to them and taught them how to live in the spirit, according to the revelations He had made on Earth. And the saints before Noah, who were "sometimes disobedient," were not the reprobate—because He did not go to that part of Hades, where the wicked are—there were no saints who had not been "sometimes disobedient." And these were named, to teach that His salvation reached to all the saints since time began.

And as Christ met and knew the penitent, and he knew Him there, and could teach the saints what He had done on earth—neither had changed their identity, or capacity to know and learn—so must it be with all the saints; and relatives and friends must there be able to communicate all that transpired on earth, during their separation. And the saints know what goes on over all our world better than we do, with our steam

and telegraphic mediums; because there is a continual influx of departing spirits into those intermediate abodes, from every part of our globe.

Death causes no change in the memory or feelings. Christ represented Dives in Hades, suffering himself, and anxious that his brethren might be saved from his "place of torment;" doubtless all the faculties are intensely expanded, and adapted to that higher life and its mysteries. And after Christ's glorification in Heaven, the influences of the Holy Spirit were more richly given to the saints in Paradise—as it was to the Church on Earth—because St. Peter says, He preached to them, that "they might live according to God in the Spirit." And St. Paul was caught up into Paradise, and saw and heard things he was not permitted to reveal; and St. John, in a vision, saw the light of Christ's glory from Heaven, filling that world with light, as sunlight falls here in billowy mists from the Sun.

Christ's resurrection and teaching revolutionized the world's opinion respecting the state of the departed, plucked out death's sting, and proved that—as we close our eyes on time—we see angels come to convey us to Paradise. The *Te Deum* represents the saints worshipping God, as they did on earth, but with greater spiritual joy. Here, we are working out our salvation; there, they are praising God—that it is sure.

Our real life does not depend on soul, body, or matter, but on the immortal spiritual body; and that will not be perfected until it is united to the resurrection spiritualized body. Here, the material body grows old, and dies; and here, it sins and suffers. But there, the spirit is raised above the power of sin, Satan, and death, and grows in grace and knowledge that prepare it for resurrection and ascension to Heaven. Meanwhile, in Paradise, the saints know all whom they had known and loved on earth, who had gone before them; and they are watching,

waiting, and praying for them—wondering how long it will be before they come to them.

Probably no human mind can imagine the rapture which fills the spirit, when released from the body and soul—as it finds itself borne aloft through the solemn star depths, and solar systems, far more vast and glorious than our own, knowing that his salvation is sure, and he is on the way to a Heavenly Paradise. And what new wonders burst on the vision, as that new world is seen, and he enters its glorious portals, and finds it filled with the beatific presence of Christ's glorified humanity; and then, falling down with the saints, he adores and praises God for His creating, redeeming, and sanctifying love.

The Christian finds himself no stranger there; welcomed by those he never ceased to love, instantly endued with spiritual intuition, he knows the saints of all ages, and learns from them all the world's past history, and something of the mysteries of God, acquired by thousands of years' studies in that Heavenly world. Nothing is strange in the worship; the training in the Church on earth has fitted him for the service there; and he awakens as from a lovely dream to the reality of what he had sometimes imagined, or had a faint foretaste of on earth. He joins in the same chants and doxologies to Christ and the most Holy Trinity, the same prayers and praises which he had learned on earth; eats of the Tree of Life, and learns, by experience, the blessedness of the communion of the saints; and loves God more and more for the new hopes of the greater eternal glory and bliss which await him in Heaven.

Our Lord said nothing to the sinner who had reviled Him on the cross; but he, too, was as suddenly translated to Hades. He saw, by the angels who came to conduct him, that his doom was sealed; and a horror of remorse must have seized him before he entered the prison of evil angels and men, and found himself among devils, and all the vilest of mankind—who, like

him, had rejected the mercy of our Heavenly Father, provided in Christ. There, too, he has ever since been growing in enmity to God, and fitting himself for condemnation to that world where the worm, that has begun to gnaw him, will never die; and that spiritual fire, which has begun to burn him, will never be quenched.

Such is the revelation Christ has made respecting the two conditions of man's life after death, and the judgment; this doctrine has been held by His Church from His day to our own, though it began early to be corrupted. And it is consonant to human reason; because, in all times, savage and civilized men have believed in a future life, and in rewards and punishments for deeds done here. It is reasonable; because, if God, who created us, be wise and just, and we are immortal, then it is reasonable that He would reward and punish for deeds done here, and right the wrongs and injustice never righted here.

Moreover, if the righteous went to Heaven, and the wicked to Hell, when they died, there would be no need of a resurrection, or future judgment—because they would be already judged; so that there must be intermediate places of abode for both, until the resurrection. And it is the loss of this doctrine, which has caused so much error and confusion in Christendom, respecting the state of the dead—some supposing it an interval of sleep, and others that there is a Purgatorial cleansing before the resurrection.

There is no intimation of either in the Gospel. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; and it was not until the second century, that Tertullian broached the doctrine that Christians must be purged by fire, before entering Heaven—a monstrous doctrine, because it detracts from the all-sufficiency of Christ's atonement. Then, two centuries later, A. D. 424, St. Augustin, of Hippo, improved on the theory, by the suggestion that it would take place between death and the resurrection; and

the theory grew gradually for nearly two centuries more, until A.D. 600, when Pope Gregory the Great, established it—as far as he was able—as an article of faith; and tried to prove it by stories of departed spirits, who were said to have returned from Purgatory, and related their sufferings. But it took four hundred years more before Pope John XVIII, A. D. 1000, instituted a day to pray for all souls in Purgatory; when no human soul ever went there, or any where else, at death, but to die, and end its being. And it was four hundred years after that, A. D. 1439, before the Council of Florence made it an Article of Faith, and changed the scriptural doctrine of Hades into the human theory of Purgatory.

St. Paul says, “There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body;” the natural body is but the sheath which holds the immortal spiritual body; and to depart from the natural body is to be present with the Lord. But how that is, or what is the nature of the presence, he did not reveal. But we do know, from His promise to the penitent thief, that the departure of the spirit from its earthly body does not impair any of the functions of the immortal spiritual body. There is no loss by the death of the soul, of any attribute of the spirit, or any faculty belonging to the personal Ego, or moral and intellectual being; but all the powers are vastly increased, and the laws of the material world no longer control it. The putting off the fleshly body, effects the spirit as little as the removal of its clothing effects the natural body; and, doubtless, an infant, suddenly translated to Paradise, would soon learn there more of the mysteries of God, and of eternity, than all that was ever known by all the saints on earth. An infant feels the power of Christ’s life, without any consciousness of it, in regeneration; and we may be sure it feels it consciously in Paradise, because it no more requires His visible presence there to impart spiritual knowledge and grace, than it does on earth.

The saints in Paradise are still a part of Christ's kingdom; they are the great van of the army of the redeemed of our race, who have finished their course on earth, in faith, and have gone so far on their way to Heaven—because Christ went there before His ascension to Heaven. And they are waiting for the rear of the army—yet fighting in the Church Militant—to come up and join them, before the resurrection, when they will go with Him, in His triumphal entry into His kingdom in Heaven. The doctrine is, therefore, practical for our encouragement and warning. Such is the marvellous lesson we have learned, from the revelations made by our Divine Lord, respecting the departed in the interval between death and the resurrection.

However righteously the saints lived, all were sinners, and none were fit for Heaven when they died; and yet, none needed any Purgatorial cleansing except what comes from Christ's blood, and the purging the old sinful body receives through death and the grave. But all need more righteousness and knowledge to fit them for Heaven, and that is what they acquire in the Heavenly Paradise. And on the last legal Jewish Passover and Sabbath ever celebrated on earth, our Lord Jesus Christ was with the saints in Paradise; the whole system of Judaism was dead, and buried with Him; and a new epoch of enlightenment was about to begin in Paradise, and on earth, with His resurrection. Because, He taught the saints how to live according to the spirit; and, after His ascension to Heaven, sent the Holy Spirit to teach them and His disciples also, and lead them into truth by the Spirit.

Thus we learn that Hades is the State Prison of God, having one department called Paradise where the righteous are, both waiting for Christ to come to judgment, and knowing what their fate will be; St. Peter speaks of all as "*tois en Phulake pneumatici*;" and that Christ did not go to Tartarus, shows the Gate of Hope is shut from all the wicked in that world of woe.



CHAPTER XLIV.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

The doctrine of the resurrection of man's body is a revelation from God, as old as his fall and sentence of death; but at first dimly promised in a Saviour, in the seed of the woman, whose heel Satan would bruise, and who would bruise Satan's head, by His resurrection from death—the heel being a symbol of death; and the head, of life. But that seed, like all others, had to grow, before the nature of its fruit would be known to have the power of a resurrection to an endless life.

Many laws and types in the natural world taught the probability of man's resurrection: the yearly decay and renewal of vegetation—the apparent death of seed sown, and its resurrection; the enfolding of insects in their shrouds, or burying themselves in the earth, to come forth again with higher forms of life and beauty, and powers of motion; and seeing all that, man could not but believe, without any other revelation, that God would restore all these lower forms of life, and not restore him, created in His own image and likeness.

An intimation of the doctrine of the resurrection runs through all God's revelation, growing into greater clearness from Adam to Christ. Enoch was translated from this world, because he pleased God—but none knew how he was taken; but

he prophesied that there would be a resurrection, and judgment by Christ. Elijah went up at noon-day, in a Heavenly Chariot. Job expressed his faith, that "out of his flesh, he would see God." Abraham looked for a city, built by God. And the Psalmist foretold that Christ's body would neither see corruption, nor be left in Hades. The Jewish Church's festival of the first-fruits, taught the doctrine. The bodies of Enoch and Elijah were doubtless resolved into the elements, without the usual process of decomposition; and only their spirits entered Paradise.

The nations, without a written revelation from God, preserved some knowledge of the resurrection, by tradition. Brahma was a God sprung from a Divine seed; and the ancient classic Gods are represented as Deified men, or men made immortal by sacrifice, as men are by death and the resurrection. And Tartarus and Elysium were the abodes of the spirits of good and bad men waiting a general judgment.

The Pagans lost the knowledge of the resurrection of the body, but everywhere retained belief in the future existence of man's spirit; and when Christ came, the Sadducees denied it. There is a reasonable probability, if man derived his spiritual life from God, in a created body, and the soul and body die for sin, and the spirit is to live forever, that it will be restored to the body; because that participated in the good and evil done here, and so should share in the rewards and punishments hereafter.

Our Lord's miracles in raising a child just dead, and a young man carried out to burial, and a man already buried—in whom it was supposed decomposition had begun—were proofs of the possibility of the raising of the bodies of the whole race; while His own resurrection is represented as the type and pledge of such a resurrection. And He solemnly declared that all who are in the graves shall one day hear His voice, as the Son of Man; and shall come forth to be judged, and rewarded or punished by Him, for the deeds done here. And whatever doubts may hang

over the actual death of those He raised, there is no doubt, if we can believe anything on God's word and man's testimony, that Jesus died on the cross; that His dead body lay three days in the tomb, while His spirit was absent from it; and when His spirit returned, it was alive again in a more glorious body, which was no longer visible to human eyes, without a miraculous manifestation of His former humanity, and was not subject to the laws of matter.

On the Feast of Dedication of the Temple, several months before Christ's crucifixion, He publicly announced His death and resurrection, and said, "I have power to lay my life down, and power to take it again;" and He foretold the time His body would lay in the tomb.

Both Pilate and the Jews assured themselves of His death and burial, and sealed the tomb; and set a watch to guard it, that there should be no deception respecting His resurrection. And nothing seemed more probable, than that both His life and religion had perished.

On the third day, the women went to the tomb, carrying spices to anoint His body—wondering, as they went, who would roll away the stone from the door. And, as they went, there was an earthquake—as Christ arose, before the sepulchre was opened. And when the women came, they saw an angel at the tomb, who had rolled away the stone, and sat on it; and they were afraid. And he said to them, "Fear not, for I know ye seek Jesus, who was crucified; why seek ye the living, among the dead? He is risen, He is not here; come and see the place where the Lord lay." The angel called Christ the Lord—his Lord as well as ours; and he had rolled away the stone, not that Christ might rise, but that the disciples could look into the tomb, and see where He had lain. And he reminded them of His promise, that He would rise the third day, and told them to tell the disciples He had risen, and they should see Him in Galilee.

Meanwhile, the terrified soldiers fled to the city, and told that Christ had risen; and the rulers bribed them to say His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while they slept. And they took the money, and did as they were told. The other women went to tell the disciples, but Mary remained at the tomb, weeping; and looking in, she saw two angels in white, at the head and foot of the place where the Lord's body had lain. And they said to her, "Why weepest thou? She replied, Because they have taken the Lord's body away, and I know not where they have laid Him."

As she spake, she turned, and saw a man, whom she supposed was the gardener; and He asked, "Why weepest thou? And she said, Sir, if thou hast taken Him away, tell Me where He is, and I will take Him away." Though our Lord appeared to His disciples many times after His resurrection, it was never in His resurrection body; but always under some other guise, or by a miraculous assuming of His fleshly body. This man said to her, "Mary"—it was the familiar tone of His human voice, and she knew it, and turned, and said in her provincial Aramaean dialect, "Rabboni, O my Master!" And He answered, "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go and tell My brethren, I ascend unto My Father, and to your Father, to My God, and your God." The forbidding to touch Him denoted that He was no longer with His disciples, as formerly; and until He was glorified in the God-head, He would not be with them in His spiritual presence, as He had promised.

Meanwhile, the other women went and related to the Apostles all that they had heard; but their words seemed like idle tales, and they did not believe them. But Peter and John hurried to the tomb, and saw Mary, who told them the Lord is risen; and the two disciples ran, and John arrived first, and looking in, saw the tomb empty. But Peter went in, and saw the linen that had wrapped the Lord's body, and the napkin that had been about

His head carefully folded and laid aside; and John then entered and saw and believed; for, as yet, they knew not the Scripture, that He should rise again." Then they believed that He was the Christ, "the Resurrection and the Life."

This candid confession, that, after so much as Christ had said to them respecting His resurrection, they did not know it would take place until they saw the empty tomb, shows that they had no desire to conceal anything damaging to Christ, or themselves; and, certainly, would not relate anything untrue.

Thus, an angel, Roman soldiers, Christ's disciples, the bribery of the Rulers of the Jews, united their testimony to Christ's resurrection. And all this was published over the whole world, while some of the actors in that scene lived, and it was never refuted; but unbelievers have said it was probably denied at the time, and Christians may have destroyed the refutation. But there is no probability of it; because the Jews were as much interested, and had better facilities to destroy the Christian records, than Christians had to destroy theirs. And history testifies against the theory, because the writings of the enemies of Christianity have survived, like Max. Tyrius, M. Antonius, Celsus, Plotinus, and others; while the writings of the Apologists, like Aristides, Quadratus, Apollinarus, Melito, and others, have perished.

Three Evangelists say Christ rose on *τῆ δέ μιᾶ τῶν σαββάτων* not the first day of the week, but on the first of the Sabbaths; because then, and ever since, Jews and Christians have each kept their own day of rest. And Christ rose on the original seventh day, when God rested from the work of creation, which was put back one day when the Israelites departed from Egypt, to commemorate their deliverance—the type of Christ's redemption—and so the Lord's day has ever since been the memorial of Creation, of the deliverance of His people from the bondage in Egypt, and of Christ's resurrection and the world's redemption—and the Jews yet hold fast to the other.

Such is the Scriptural history of Christ's resurrection, and there was other remarkable testimony that day, to its truth; for towards evening, two disciples—Cleophas, and it is supposed St. Luke—were on the road to Emmaus, when a stranger overtook them as they walked, and said, "What manner of conversation is it ye have, as ye walk, and are sad?" And Cleophas answered, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and knowest not the things which have come to pass here? And He said, What things? They replied, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet, mighty in deeds and words before God, and all the people, whom the Chief Priests crucified; but we trusted it was He who would deliver Israel, and to-day is the third day since it was done."

The prophecy that Christ would rise the third day has been caviled at as unfulfilled; but here are living witnesses of the age, who knew Jewish reckoning, who said it was the third day after His crucifixion; and they told Christ of the report of the angels, who said He had risen. They show their doubts of His Messiahship, call Him a prophet mighty in deed and word, and candidly say they had hoped it was He who would deliver Israel. Nothing, in the world's romance or fiction, ever showed such a consistent story as this.

And He said to them, "O! fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." This is the second time our Lord is said to have spoken after His resurrection: first, at the grave in the morning, telling Mary to go and tell His disciples that He had risen; and now, calling Himself the Christ, and explaining the prophecies concerning Himself.

When they drew nigh to the village, He made as if He

would go further; but they persuaded Him to come in and abide, because the day was far spent. And He did so; and when they sat at meat—bread and wine were the usual food at supper—He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and He vanished out of their sight. This was evidently a renewal of the celebration of the Lord's Supper—He blessed it, and made it eucharistical; and it had the sacramental grace, to make them better know the Lord. Then they recalled how their hearts burned at His presence, while He talked with them, and explained the Scriptures by the way. And they returned to the ten Apostles at Jerusalem—for Thomas was absent—and told them the Lord had risen, and appeared to Peter, and what had happened to them. And while they were speaking, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said, "Peace be unto you." But they were terrified, and supposed Him to be a spirit. And He said unto them, "Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet; it is I Myself." The disciples were glad; and He said again, "Peace be unto you; as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you;" and He breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Thus the two great acts of this day were, to open His disciples' minds to understand the Scriptures, and to empower them to act as His successors until the Holy Ghost came—and empowered them to organize His kingdom, and transmit that power to their successors—which they could not do until His sacred humanity was glorified in the God-head.

The Apostles had assembled with closed doors, because they feared the Jews might arrest and murder them—as they had Christ; but He entered and vanished from the room, the door being shut. His spiritual body was not subject to the laws of matter.

No other event in our Lord's life is confirmed by such proofs as His resurrection; because it was the strongest evidence of His Divine nature, foreknowledge, and power, and it is the key-stone in Christian Theology. St. Paul calls Easter, "The Festival," by way of eminence, which shows it was celebrated by the Apostles, and is the root of all the Christian Holy Days; because it is the anniversary of the first Lord's Day, of the first Easter ever celebrated, and is the great central doctrine of the Gospel, which gives vitality to all the others. And so, St. Paul says, "Unless Christ be risen, our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain;" for on that fact rests the proof that He is the Resurrection and the Life, as He declared Himself to be. And he says, also, "We Apostles are false witnesses of God; (because they testified) that God raised up Christ, whom He raised not, if the dead rise not."

Jesus' resurrection perfected His human nature—it was a new birth from its material to a spiritual body; and it showed that death and the resurrection are means of man's development from a mortal to an immortal state. Christ's death, without His resurrection, would have been fruitless; because it would be too much for human faith to believe He could raise our bodies, if He had not raised His own.

The first Christian Festival of Easter was instituted by Christ, to commemorate His own resurrection; and as bread and wine were the common food of all classes when our Lord came, it is certain, also, that He personally consecrated the elements of the Blessed Sacrament, and gave them as the memorials of His death and resurrection, and as means of imparting spiritual enlightenment. The resurrection was a preparation of His body for its ascension to Heaven; and on that depended the coming of the Holy Spirit to abide, and through whom, Christ Himself, in the Spirit, would carry on the work of salvation, which He began in the flesh, to give His eternal life and righteousness to all believers. And the Church embodied it into her Holy Seasons,

Creed, Gospel, and Epistles; and especially into the Preface for the Holy Communion on Easter: "To praise God for the resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord."

He was the resplendant first-fruit of what all mankind will be at the resurrection; matter had no more dominion over His body. Mary did not know Him at the tomb, nor the disciples at Emmaus, nor the Apostles in the upper room at Jerusalem; nor ever on the forty days He remained on earth—except as He assumed a human form or voice, like that He had while in the flesh. No eye ever saw His resurrection body in its spiritual state, which is evident from St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, where he says, "Now henceforth know we Christ no more after the flesh."

And we learn from Christ, that death and the resurrection are the new birth struggles of our bodies to immortality; that we grow in the nursery of the Church Militant, to prepare us for the Church at Rest, in Paradise, to be fitted for the Church in Glory, in Heaven. And this reveals to us an infinite view of God's wisdom and love, and of the dignity and glory of the eternal life for which He created us; and of the debt of love and gratitude we owe Him for the wonders of our Creation, and Redemption, and capabilities for an endless progress in knowledge and glory in His eternal kingdom.

It was Christ's resurrection which made the Apostles begin to believe in Him, as the Incarnate Son of God, a person of the God-head; but that faith was not perfected until His ascension to Heaven, and the Holy Ghost came. The Life of Christ—which then began to enter into the life of men—became a great spiritual power, that has ever since been operative; it gave a new impulse in every realm of intellectual activity and development of the human mind, entering into, and exalting, and civilizing the nations, improving arts, civilization, and science. And no new law of matter has been discovered, which does not owe

it to the spiritual expansion that then begun, and is now manifest in the religious development that is spreading among the nations, and preparing the way for Christ to return as the Son of Man, in the glory of God, to judge the world.





CHAPTER XLV.

THE GREAT FORTY DAYS.

St. Luke says Christ showed Himself alive after His resurrection forty days, being seen of the disciples by many infallible signs, and teaching them concerning the kingdom of God. John prepared Christ's way, "preaching the kingdom of Heaven is at hand;" and He took up John's message, saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." And when He sent the Apostles, it was with the same message; but he charged the Seventy "As ye go, preach; saying the kingdom of God has come near you." And after His resurrection, He instructed the Apostles how to organize it, after the Holy Ghost came, to make it a visible kingdom to convey His spiritual life and righteousness, through its ministry and sacraments.

And those forty days are a distinct and marvellous period in His earthly mission. All His appearances were supernatural; no one ever saw His spiritual body, knew its nature, or where He abode while He remained on earth. All the Apostles were convinced of His identity, except Thomas, on the day He rose; but he refused to believe until he saw the wounds of the crucifixion in His body, and remained in unbelief eight days, until Christ miraculously showed them to him. Such a man would not be likely to be deceived, or countenance deception in others;

and no one was more deeply interested to discover fraud, if there were any.

Christ remained those forty days to fulfill the type of Moses in the Mount, receiving instruction from God how to prepare the ministry and ritual, and to organize the old kingdom of God, after the Heavenly pattern shown him; so Christ devoted these days to teaching the Apostles respecting His kingdom, the Christian Church, how to perfect the work He began, and prepare it to go on without His visible presence. All His teaching before this was prospective; and the calling of the Apostles and Seventy, the institution of the Sacraments, were but preparations for receiving the Holy Ghost.

The Evangelists relate but few of Christ's appearances, on the forty days, and but few of His sayings; and they are so concise, and differently narrated, that it is impossible to tell exactly when or where they were spoken. And they are involved in a similar mystery to that seen in His earthly life and sayings; and all were revelations only to the Apostles, to confirm their faith in Him, and prepare them for the responsibility to devolve on them. And they gave commandments afterwards, which they said were received from Christ, of which the Gospels make no mention.

Christ told the Apostles how to fill up the outline of the kingdom He had given them, and all that they embodied in the Ritual of the Christian Church. And there was no need to record this in the Gospel, because it was done before the Gospels were written, and there was the visible Church to be seen and known of all. And if more had been written in the Gospel, it would not have added more weight to the testimony, nor been any more effectual to convince mankind, nor to save the Church from schisms.

Christ promised that the Holy Ghost should empower them to succeed to both His High Priesthood and Apostleship, and

bring to their minds all He had said to them. So St. Paul said, "The Church is built on the foundations of the Prophets and Apostles, CHRIST being the chief corner stone;" and the Ministry, Sacraments, Creed, and Liturgy He ordained, yet survive in His Church. And thirteen centuries ago, and two centuries before St. Augustin went to Britain, Gildas called the old Liturgy of the British Church, "THE LORD'S RITUAL."

And all this proves that the Christian Church is but the development from the mother Church, which the Son of God inaugurated in Paradise, organized on Mt. Sinai, and perfected after His resurrection; and so revealed it as to manifest the spiritual depths of the Law, and prepare it to continue until the world's end, and to transmit all the blessings of His Incarnation and Atonement.

And now the Ministry called Apostolic, and the Apostle's Creed, are not so called from the Apostles—but from the great High Priest and Apostle, the Son of God, who was sent by the Father from Heaven to establish His kingdom, with its Sacraments, Ordinances, and Ritual, and to produce a higher spiritual life and righteousness than the Jewish Church could; for, as St. Paul says, "The Law made nothing perfect." And it was "necessary, therefore, that the patterns of the things in the Heavens should be purified with these; but the Heavenly things (sacraments and priesthood, and ordinances sanctified by the Holy Ghost) themselves with better sacrifices;" that is, of Christ's humiliation and death, so as to produce the righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ.

One whole week passed after Christ's resurrection, and no one knew where He abode; or whether they would ever see Him again, until He fulfilled His promise to Mary, to meet His disciples in Galilee. But after eight days, the disciples were again assembled—the next Lord's day—and He appeared again, and stood in their midst; and giving them His salutation, "Peace be

unto you," and saying, "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and on earth," He reproved them for their unbelief and hardness of heart—because all doubted His resurrection at first, and Thomas had remained unbelieving until then. There was no announcement of His coming, but the same mysterious and supernatural entrance—the doors being closed; and He said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless but believing." Rationalists, reasoning from material laws, deny that Christ could pass into a house, the doors and windows being shut; but, until we know more of a spiritual body, it is Christian faith to believe as the Gospel represents it.

There is no evidence that Thomas made any attempt to touch the Lord; if it were possible that any signs of the wounds were visible in His glorified body, they would not have been visible to Thomas. For Christ evidently miraculously revealed to him the appearance of His human body, as it looked soon after His crucifixion; and when he saw it, he cried out, "My Lord and My God." Theologians commonly regard these words as an expression of Thomas' faith in Christ's Divinity; but there is no probability of it, because Christ had never publicly or privately taught it—except in a mystery not to be explained until the Holy Ghost came.

And, so far from believing in Christ as the incarnate Son of God, he did not believe in His resurrection; and declared he would not, unless his senses were convinced by the sight of the prints of the wounds in His body. And when Christ manifested them, he was convinced that His body had risen, and that He was the Christ; and he called Him, "My Lord and My God," in the Jewish sense. And I gratefully acknowledge my obligation to a learned and critical Roman Catholic theologian, for calling my attention to this obscurity concerning Christ, as a person of the God-head.

There is no instance where Christ taught it in the Gospel, before His resurrection, though we now see plainly that it was often in His words; and it would have defeated the final object of His mission, had it been understood by the Rulers of the Jews. Because, as St. Paul said, years after the Ascension, had they known it, "they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory;" and had the Apostles known it, St. John would not have confessed on the resurrection morn, that they did not know He was to rise from the dead. Nor would Thomas' confession have been unconfirmed by Christ, when he made it. He did not commend his faith, even, but left him in his Jewish belief; saying, "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet believed."

Moreover, on all those forty resurrection days, Christ gave His disciples no new proofs of His divinity—except the awful mystery surrounding Him. He was no longer the Prophet-like Moses or Elijah, living in the lowest plane of humanity, and demanding no special reverence from His Apostles; but whenever He appeared to them they were astonished or terrified, but as yet, they did not know His Divinity.

And on that single occasion, where the Rulers of the Jews did perceive the deeper meaning of His words, in claiming to be the Son of God—and accused Jesus of blasphemy, because He said, "I and My Father are One"—He instantly gave them to understand that their Law admitted of such application to Him as the Christ. He asked, "Is it not written in your Law, I said ye are Gods; and if He called them Gods to whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?"

St. John relates only four of our Lord's appearances, when there were many more; and he says Christ said and did many things in the forty days, which are not recorded. But many of them are visible in the organization of the Church. And he re-

corded what the Holy Ghost directed, or what looked sufficient, in his judgment, to convince all future generations that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, who was made flesh, and dwelt with the Apostles; and in whom they behold the glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, and that "believing in Him, they might have life through His Name."

Christ's next appearance was to the seven Apostles, at the Sea of Tiberias. A week had passed, and where He abode, or what He did, was unknown; but the disciples waited, expecting a call to meet Him in Galilee, when they expected His kingdom would be instituted—for they yet looked for a political one. And these atoms from God's word to build the kingdom on, make the bulk of revelation correspond to the atoms of gases and matter, and the remains of the protozoa, which form the foundations of the kingdom of nature, and the ether and atmosphere, in which the solar system floats, and prove that one God is the Author of both.

Meanwhile, the Apostles seem to have returned to their former occupation as fishermen, and did not know what awaited them. They had toiled all the old Sabbath night, and had taken nothing, and in the morning dawn saw a stranger standing on the shore. They did not know Him; but it was not from the darkness or distance, because He hailed them and asked if they had any food. And they answered, No! As on all former meetings, His appearance was as a strange man. And He said, "Cast your net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find;" and they did so, and the net was immediately filled with fish.

St. John said to Peter; "It is the Lord;" and he pulled off his coat, and cast himself into the Sea. And the disciples, in another boat, helped to drag the net ashore. On a former occasion the net break, but not so now; it was a symbol of the great drag-net of the kingdom, which was to gather in men, and land them safely on the Heavenly shore. No word is told of how

Peter fared, in the water. But he had some knowledge of the power of Christ's will over fish, when he caught that one with the tribute money in its mouth; and he saw, that, in His resurrection body, He yet held dominion over them.

When the disciples landed, they saw a fire, and fish, and bread; and Christ told them to bring their fish, but none durst ask, "Who art Thou? Knowing He was the Lord." Whether His act of eating before the Apostles was real, or only appeared so to them, His mystical body needed no earthly food to sustain it; and His object was to convince them of His personal identity.

After the meal ended, Christ said to Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" And he said, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee;" and He said, "Feed my lambs." Thus He committed the children to His Church; they were the first objects of His love and care, after His resurrection. Again He said, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" He answered, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee;" and He said, "Feed My sheep." After the lambs have grown to sheep, they must yet be cared for. Then a third time, He said to Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" Peter was grieved because He asked the third time, and he said, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee;" and He said, "Feed My sheep."

This last word to feed, is the same as was used for the lambs; all in the fold are His now, all are objects of His love and care—and He turned them over to His Church, to be fed and trained; and love for Him must be the impelling motive, to make His ministers do their duties to the flock. But why address Peter, as if this supervision were especially for him? The reason is plain: after Peter's recent blasphemy and denial, He might well fear, that, like Judas, he had forfeited his right to the Apostleship; but the Lord thus assured him of His forgiveness, and that he should have his throne in His kingdom with

the other Apostles. And the triple repetition of the question respecting his love could not but have recalled to Peter's mind his three denials of Christ; and the Lord's words to Simon, the Pharisee, when He asked Him about the two debtors, and he said he supposed he would love most to whom most was forgiven—and thus assuring him that he was forgiven.

Therefore, instead of conferring any supremacy on St. Peter, our Lord's intention, evidently, was to assure him that he had not forfeited his Apostleship; in no instance did he exercise any supremacy over the other Apostles, but, on the contrary, appears always subordinate.

When the candidate was selected to fill Judas' place, the eleven Apostles "gave their lots;" when the seven deacons were chosen to complete the three-fold ministry, the twelve Apostles said, "Look ye out seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint." And though there were twelve lines of Apostolic succession, when the first Apostolic College assembled to decide about doctrine, St. James presided; and St. Paul rebuked St. Peter, because of his compromising with the Jews at Antioch, and "withstood him to the face." And when St. Peter was an old man, and laboring in Babylon—from whence he wrote his Epistles, and where he suffered martyrdom—St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, which he would hardly have done if St. Peter were Bishop there, or had ever been at Rome. There is no particle of historical evidence, civil or sacred, to show that Peter ever saw Rome—until one hundred and fifty years after his death, when the statue of a Syrian God named Semo, pretended to be Simon Peter, was dug up; and on that fact hangs all the later history of his Apostleship there.

Then said the Lord to St. Peter, "When thou shalt be old . . . another shall gird thee, and carry thee where thou wouldest not. Follow Me." This would recall to his mind the words He

spake to him, the evening before His crucifixion, after the Pascal Supper, "Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards;" which foretold His violent death by crucifixion, as the way he would follow Him, and as the end of his Apostleship, and "thereby glorified God."

Then Peter, turning to St. John, said, "Lord, what shall this man's end be?" for the answer shows that is the probable meaning of the interrogation; and He said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" And Peter and the disciples inferred that Christ meant St. John should not die until He came at the end of the world to judgment; but He referred to His first coming—of which he had before told them—to judgment on the Jewish nation, to destroy their polity and Temple, and put an end to the Daily Sacrifice, and scatter them among the nations; and He was the only Apostle who lived to witness it.

The next appearance of Christ to the Apostles was especially devoted to opening their minds to understanding all that Moses, and the Prophets and Psalmist had foretold respecting His death and resurrection, and the new way for forgiveness of sins that was to be preached to all nations in His Name—which was another act of His Divine royalty; but He charged them to remain at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high, to exercise this new authority.

Though the Lord then gave the Apostles power to understand the old Scriptures concerning Himself, He did not give them the understanding of all He said to them which was to be written in the New Testament, and enable them to ordain the Rulers and organize the Church, until His ascension, and the Holy Ghost came to abide—that it might be forever known that the Church is not of man, nor from man, nor of this world, but of God.

What time transpired between this appearing of our Lord,

and the last one—when He led five hundred disciples out to Bethany, and gave His last great charge, and Resurrection Commission to the Apostles, and revealed to them the name by which God was forever to be known in His Church—not a word is said in the Gospels; and all this mystery identifies Him as the God of the Old Testament, of whom Isaiah said, “Verily Thou art a God who hidest Thyself.”

When He met the disciples there, some worshipped Him, but others doubted; and the reason of the doubt was that He appears never to have manifested Himself under His former appearance, to compel the faith of any but the eleven Apostles, who were His chosen witnesses for His resurrection; to them He committed the duty of convincing the world.

At that last solemn meeting, when the Lord was to depart from this world, in His bodily presence, and commit to His Church to carry on the work He had begun, He renewed the declaration He made to the Apostles on the evening of His resurrection, “All power is given Me in Heaven, and on Earth;” and in virtue of that, He gave the great Resurrection Commission and promise, to go into all the world and disciple all nations, “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost”—whoever believed and was baptized, would be saved; and whosoever sins they remitted or retained, He would ratify in Heaven, and whoever would not believe should be condemned.

This great Christian doctrine of the one God, in the most Holy Trinity, into whose name the disciples were to be baptized, was then given to the Church—to be held, taught, and transmitted, as the fountain of all power and truth—and from whom came all the sacred doctrines of the Gospel, and all the authority of the Church. The only living and true God, whose Name is above every name, to whom every knee must bow; and so bow to Christ, because He was to be glorified in the God-head. It

was the last revelation of Christ to man, the day He ascended to Heaven, of the One in Three, and Three in One, the greatest mystery of God and eternity; and it was the only doctrine He revealed on the forty days, as the summary and source of all truth, and the foundation of His kingdom's charter. And so it has ever since stood in the Creed, and Doxologies, and Prayers of His Church, as the bond of unity for all Gospel truth. And all who are baptized and signed with Christ's cross in that Holy Name, know they have received remission of their sins, through His most precious blood. By this Holy Name, the Apostles were empowered to organize Christ's kingdom, to ordain its Rulers, to teach, to bind, and to loose, to govern it, and transmit their power and authority to their successors, until Christ comes again; for He promised, as His last great promise, and before He pronounced His last blessing as He was ascending to Heaven, "Lo! I am with you always, to the end of the world." And the power to forgive sins is not in the priest—but from Christ, through the Holy Spirit, in the Sacraments; the priest is the agent, through Christ, in the Spirit—He Himself conveys the sacramental grace. But the Apostles did not even understand the doctrine of the Trinity, nor His Divine nature as it was then revealed in their great commission, until the Holy Ghost came with power; they were yet to remain at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high.





CHAPTER XLVI.

OUR LORD'S ASCENSION.

There have been three Ascensions of men to other worlds, without passing through the common dissolution of the body—under the three dispensations, or covenants, of God with man—and each one in an ascending scale. The first was Enoch, under the Covenant of Sacrifice, which extended from Adam to Abraham; he was translated because he walked with God, but the time and manner are not related. The second was Elijah, under the Covenant of Circumcision, which prevailed from Abraham to Christ; that was seen by Elisha, Elijah rising on the air, and received by a Heavenly chariot. These both went to Paradise. The third was Christ, under His own Christian Covenant, after He returned from Paradise, going up at noon-day from the presence of many spectators, ascending by His own Divine power to Heaven—as the first fruits of mankind, as the Forerunner of the race, and the assurance that He opened the way for all believers.

A thousand years before Jesus' birth, the Psalmist foretold His ascension to Heaven, and the blessings that would follow it; in a prophetic vision he saw His triumphal ascension, and, in the rapture of poetic inspiration, cried out, as if he saw Him approaching the Heavenly world, "Lift up your heads, O Ye

Gates! and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in." And again, "Thou hast ascended on High, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men: yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord our God might dwell among them." And on the resurrection morn, Christ foretold to Mary that He was about to ascend to His Father in Heaven.

Of the last interview of Christ, at Bethany, with the disciples, that continued from morning to noon-day, but little is recorded; but He never could have looked so gracious and Divine to them before, nor can it be imagined that His own emotions were ever deeper, than at the two things about to happen to Him—the parting from His beloved disciples, and His ascension to, and admission of His human nature into the glory of the God-head in Heaven.

While they were grouped around Him, listening with awe and wonder at His words, and expecting some new manifestation, their minds were yet dull, after all they had seen and heard from Him, for they still expected a political kingdom; because they asked, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" But His answer furnished no explanation of the nature of the kingdom—only they must wait at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on High; and He had before told them, that, when the Holy Ghost came, He would enable them to understand all things respecting Him.

There is no record of any parting embraces, no words of farewell, no tears which such a separation, and the sundering of such love, would be likely to cause; but, suddenly, while the Lord was blessing them, He ascended on the air, and was met by angels, who came down to the Apostles and told them He had gone to Heaven, to be seated at God's right hand; and He would come again, as they saw Him go, on the clouds, to judge

the world. And but for the angels' testimony, they would not have known but that Christ returned to Paradise.

What unity there is in the Gospel. What consistency and reasonableness in the narrative. Christ said, "I came down from Heaven," and that He is the Son of God; and leaving the world, He said He was going to Heaven; and only His risen, spiritual body could ascend there. And the ascension confirmed what the Apostles had seen—that He was no longer subject to material laws, but gravitated by the force of His own will to Heaven; and by a mightier law than that which governs the universe, He passed from the earth, and took His sacred humanity to the throne of God. No human imagination ever invented such a story.

That day there was seen a new sight in Heaven—the Son of Man glorified, and worshipped by angelic hosts. As the Son of God, He resumed His place in the God-head, because He could do more for His Church there, than on earth; He told His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also." And He glorified His human nature in the God-head, that He might return in the Holy Spirit, and abide in His Church, according to His promise, until the end of the world, and finish the work of redemption He began in the flesh. And there, from His throne, He has ever watched over His Church; and here on earth, in the Holy Spirit, He has ever since called and consecrated its rulers, helped them in their labors, and sustained them in their trials and sufferings, and regenerated and sanctified all believers.

And from all this, we learn that the Incarnation of the Son of God wrought as great changes in Heaven, as on earth. Because once, there was but one nature in the God-head—then, a human nature was added to it. Once, no man had seen God; but now, the Son of Man, Christ Jesus, lives in the blaze of His glory. Once, all the angels were holy; through the revolt of

one, many fell; and by the Blood of the Lamb, they were overcome and cast out; and now, all who were stable can never more be tempted by Satan. Once, none but Christ could enter Heaven; now, He has opened the kingdom to all believers—so that, after the resurrection, they can also enter there.

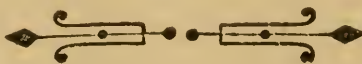
There is something, in this world's romance, in splendid, self-sacrificing deeds, which touch the deepest sensibilities of our nature; and it is because the spirit is immortal, that everything supernatural inspires us with awe or delight. And all God has revealed to us, through Christ, of our future relations to Him, and the Heavenly worlds, and our future existence in them, is Heavenly romance, and the poetry of religion, adapted to our nature, and designed to awaken in us the desire and effort to fit ourselves for our higher life.

St. Paul makes this practical application of the doctrine—“If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” We see in the whole plan of the Incarnation, the wisdom and love of God, in giving us a religion so adapted to our nature; so ennobling to it, and so designed to excite us to exertion in doing its duties, and fitting ourselves for a higher eternal life.

It is often said that the truth of Christ's Divine origin and nature—and so of Christianity—rests chiefly on the fact of His resurrection; but the death and resurrection were but intermediate and connecting links in the two more essential facts of the Incarnation and Ascension to Heaven. If these were true, then the resurrection was a reasonable event; for unless He ascended to Heaven after His resurrection, it would have been too much for human faith to believe that He ever came from Heaven. Easter is sometimes called the Queen of the Christian Festivals; but the Ascension is the King of the Festivals, because Christ then ascended to Heaven, to be enthroned as the Son of Man, in the Royalty of the God-head.

And in all our world's romance, there is nothing so marvelous, bewildering, and enchanting, as this story of the infant Jesus—born in this world of a virgin woman Mother, grown here to Manhood the Son of God incarnate in Him—now enthroned in the glory of the God-head in Heaven, yet Head of His Church on earth; and besides this, reproving the world of sin, calling men to repentance, exalted—as St. Peter said—to Heaven, to be a Prince and Saviour, and give repentance to Israel.

Our Lord's resurrection from death does not so inspire our imagination, nor quicken our faith, nor raise our hopes of future glory, as His ascension; because we see in that the possibility and proof of our own ascension, and inheritance with Him in Heaven. He said to His disciples, "I ascend to My Father, and your Father, to My God, and to your God;" and "where I am, there shall ye be also." And His ascension is proof that we can ascend and live with Him in that Divine presence; and it is a motive to impel us to do all in our power to live so as to secure the inheritance. It teaches us to reverence our bodies, to strive to be holy; because, without holiness no one can see God. And we know that we are seeking the things above, when here below we are doing all our duties in Christ's Church according to His example. The Mother Church prepared the way for our Lord's first coming, and His Church is now preparing for His second coming; and our rejoicing then will be proportioned to what we have done to prepare ourselves, and the world, for that august event.





CHAPTER XLVII.

CHRIST GLORIFIED.

Our Lord said to His Apostles, in that last discourse, the evening before His crucifixion, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you. But if I depart, I will send Him unto you; and He will reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment," and guide them into all truth, and regenerate and sanctify believers. They did not know what He meant by going away, nor where He was going to, nor who the Comforter would be.

But on the resurrection morning, He told Mary to tell the disciples, "I ascend to My Father and God, and to your Father and God;" and when He ascended, the angels told them He had gone to Heaven. And all we yet know of that kingdom is that it is the place of God's abode and throne, and a realm of infinite glory; and He said, "Heaven is My Throne, and the Earth My footstool;" and as God is a Spirit, it must be a spiritual kingdom. Jesus also told the Apostles, "All that the Father hath is mine; therefore I said the Comforter shall take of Mine, and show it unto you."

As the Son of Man, His human nature was admitted, at its glorification, into the same union with God the Father, and the Spirit, that He had, as the Son of God, before His incarnation;

by which His sacred humanity became omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. And that was one reason why it was expedient for His Apostles, and the Church, and the world, that He should ascend to Heaven; because, there He could do more for them than in the flesh on earth. Because, while in the flesh, He was only in one country, and came to call only the Jews to repentance, and to prepare the way for His kingdom; but in the Spirit, His presence would be universal, His kingdom organized—and while He called men to repent here, He would intercede for them in Heaven, and give repentance and forgiveness to those who asked, and righteousness to all believers. And, finally—His presence being invisible—He could never again be persecuted, or crucified.

After our Lord's resurrection, a visible change came over His bodily presence and powers; but a vastly greater change attended His glorification in the God-head. When the first Christian Martyr suffered for Christ, he saw Heaven opened, and Christ standing at God's right hand; and he prayed to Him to forgive his persecutors, and to receive his spirit. And when Christ appeared to Saul of Tarsus, a light from Heaven shined on Him so bright that he fell to the earth, and heard Him saying, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest"—persecuting His Church, or disciples, is yet persecuting Him. And when He appeared to St. John, at Patmos, he was overcome by the splendor of His Divine presence. His countenance was like the brightness of the Sun, His voice like the sound of many waters, in His right hand were seven stars, and out of His mouth was a sharp sword; and His name was no longer the Son of Man, but "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." And He sent back this message to His disciples and a dying world: "I am alive forever more, and have the keys of Hell and of Death; him that overcometh I will make a pillar in the Temple of My God; and I will write upon him the

Name of My God, the Name of the City of My God, and My new Name; and will grant him to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father, on His throne; and he shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be My son."

Such were to be some of the grand results—so far as our race is concerned—of the Incarnation of the Son of Man on earth, in man's nature; and the glorification of the Son of Man in the God-head, in Heaven. And no human mind can imagine the majesty and grandeur, the might and magnificence, of the God-Man, on the throne of God and the universe; or of His increased power to bless and save men, on earth. And no other world, or race of beings, can be as dear to Him as man; because He has taken the earth's elements and man's nature, and glorified them in the God-head. And it looks as if ten of our days were occupied in the festivities in Heaven, as the Apostles waited so long after the Ascension, until Pentecost—the anniversary of the giving of the Law, and the institution of the old kingdom and priesthood—before the Holy Ghost came; and then Christ returned in and with the Holy Spirit, to abide on earth, in the miraculous way described by St. Luke; on the Lord's day, when the Apostles were assembled for worship, "Suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance, the wonderful works of God." The names of fifteen countries are mentioned, and there were, doubtless, many dialects and different languages spoken by them; and "they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, behold these are all Galileans, and how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born." It might be supposed that the

tongues were a temporary miraculous gift for the occasion, were there not evidence to the contrary; for, eight years later, there was a similar manifestation at Cæsarea, when "they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." (Acts x:46.)

From that returning of Christ, in the Holy Ghost, the Apostles received power to organize His kingdom, to consecrate the Christian priesthood, and to prepare the way for His second coming, in the glory of the God-head; from that day the Man Christ Jesus has exercised dominion over the visible and invisible worlds; has abode in His Church, and made every member's body a Temple of the Holy Ghost. And from this it is seen how intimately, through Him and His kingdom, all its members are allied to God, and to Heaven.

The going away of our Saviour in the flesh, was the crowning act of His incarnate life on earth; and His return in the Spirit, was the crowning blessing of His manhood's glorification in Heaven. It was the beginning of His new work in Heaven—for us men, and our salvation—of His preparation for His Church there; and of His new work, on earth, of carrying on the salvation He began in the flesh, a thousand fold more effectively in the Spirit—whereby we perceive, more clearly, the depths of the mystery of the love of God, in Christ, of the plan of our Creation and Redemption, and future eternal life; and of His plan for spreading His Gospel and Church among all nations, and of imparting His life and righteousness to all believers, and carrying on the world's salvation.

St. Peter said to the High Priest, when he was brought before him for teaching and working miracles in Christ's Name, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree; Him hath God exalted, with His right hand, to be a Prince, and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them who obey

Him;" and all such then, and ever since, have found Him an all-sufficient Saviour, and He will be their God forever.

The Holy Spirit wrought with the Father and the Son, in creating our world as He has ever since co-operated with them in its moral government; He inspired the Prophets, He caused the immaculate conception of Jesus, He descended on Him to consecrate Him for His earthly mission. And thus began the New Dispensation on earth—far more wonderful than Creation—by sanctifying men, and exalting them to be God's spiritual children, through Christ entering into them as He did into Him, to abide forever.

The first mission of the Holy Spirit was by His eternal procession from the Father and the Son; but His second mission brought Christ's glorified humanity with Him, in which the fiery glory of the God-head is so softened that it can enter into our bodies and make them His temples; so that every good thought, every holy desire, and every longing after Christ's righteousness, come through His Divine operation. And He can be every where at the same time, reprovng the millions of our race of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come; regenerating the penitent, comforting the mourning, succoring the tempted, and sanctifying believers.

Thus began the reign of Christ in the Spirit, after He was glorified in Heaven; and now we see why it was expedient for Him to depart. St. Paul says, "The love and kindness of God our Saviour appeared towards man, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour." And this is the mystery of Godliness: That, as the union of the Holy Spirit with Jesus' human nature made Him the GOD-MAN, so Christ, in the Holy Spirit, regenerating our human nature in Holy Baptism, makes us CHRIST-MEN, or Christians; which enables us to receive the Gifts of the Spirit, when that life is Confirmed in us, and thenceforth to bring forth

the Fruits of the Spirit, which are a righteousness like Christ's.

St. Paul says, we are "buried into Christ by baptism," which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory;" and, as all know, if they have so received Him, no one can doubt as to whether he be a Christian or no. And it affords no ground for merit on our part, but hangs all on Christ; and is designed to intensify our love of Him, to inspire our zeal to obey Him, and give us patience in bearing His cross.

The organized Christian Church was first mentioned by name the day the Holy Ghost came, and the people asked what must we do to be saved. And three thousand converts were that day added to it. And St. Luke says, from that day "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." And the doctrine that our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Spirit, now conveys all Divine grace through His Church to our world, runs through the Acts of the Apostles, the Canonical Epistles, and Ritual of the Church.

Without our Lord's return in the Spirit, there would have been no speaking of tongues with the Apostles to fit them to go into all the world to preach the Gospel; no power in them to ordain other Apostles, whom the Holy Spirit named Bishops (Acts xix:28); no Church organized; no regeneration and sanctification through the Sacraments; and no Gospels written. And all Christ did in the flesh would have made no more lasting impression in our world, than the teaching and miracles of the Prophets. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit which has made Christ's ministry the power of an endless life—a world embracing, time enduring power—in impelling men to long, and strive for, their own and the world's salvation, and so prepare them for His Second Advent.

And the consciousness of His invisible presence on earth, reproving, restraining, and sanctifying men, and drawing them by the invisible cords of His love from the ways of sin to the

paths of righteousness; gathering the nations into His kingdom, diffusing knowledge, elevating the people, refining their civilization, has increased century after century, and glorified His Name.

Christ in the Spirit is doing more powerfully on the whole world, what He did in one country, while He was in the flesh—working miracles of love and mercy, calling sinners to repent, sanctifying believers, calling and empowering His ministers—for when Matthias was elected, it was by Christ, and in answer to the Apostles' prayer: "Thou Lord show which Thou hast chosen." And He has always given success to their labors, and comforted them in their troubles, exactly as they have looked to Him for help; and has also made Laymen a Royal Priesthood in praying, and giving, and working for all benevolent objects, and for the world's salvation; for they, also, receive grace for their work, from Christ, through the Holy Spirit, as His Ministers do.

Meanwhile, He has also been everywhere raising the fallen, healing the broken hearted, and supporting the dying. All these are His works, from the first desire of the penitent sinner until the last Holy Communion of the dying Christian, preparing for his entrance, in the spirit, to the Saints in Paradise.

Jesus now, by the still small voice of the Holy Spirit, yet speaks to the conscience of men, who never heard of His Name, or deathless love; and makes Himself heard above the tumult of the passions within, and the strife of the world without, and writes His law on every mind, and moves more mysteriously than the blowing of the wind. There is nothing too high for His majesty and power, for He is God; and nothing too lowly for His love, for He is Man, and knows all our infirmities, and experienced our death.

When Christ returned in the Spirit, miracles were continued only for a short time, as they were no longer needed; because His witness to man's spirit more than supplied their

place. It is the Regal and Priestly power of the Son of God, which makes Him our intercessor in Heaven, as well as our helper on earth, and keeps open the channels of grace between God and men; and from whence has flowed the life and light of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, that have flooded the earth, and made our Christian civilization and science so much superior to any which existed before Him.

Thus our Lord has fulfilled His promise that He would return to this world—would not leave His disciples comfortless, but would draw all the world to Him. He has drawn the heathen by the law written in their minds; and drawn Christendom by the story of His love unto death, His resurrection, and ascension, and glorification in the God-head, and the revelation that He has opened the kingdom of Heaven to all who believe and obey Him, and made these doctrines understood as they never were before—and never could have been, but for His Divine love and infinite condescension.

Thus the Father's promise to glorify Christ, is fulfilled: First, by exalting His humanity to the God-head, and kingdom of Heaven; Second, by erecting Him a kingdom on earth, more renowned, universal, and lasting, than any other which ever existed—King of a kingdom that has engirdled the earth, on which the sun never sets, and its worship of Christ as God goes on day and night, which has kings and queens as its subjects who find it the best safe-guard for their stability, and has outlived contemporary empires; and its members have always been of the highest type of manhood, and so fitted for His kingdom in Heaven; Third, by the glory of the blessings which His religion has conferred on mankind; Fourth, by the prophecies now fulfilling—that the Gentiles would flow into His kingdom, and men would become as Gods—seen in our Christian civilization and science; and, lastly, by the fact that He now reigns King of the angelic Hierarchy, and King of the millions of Saints in Paradise.

And Christ is glorified by the power of His kingdom in its aggression on the old Paganism, and Heathenism, and serfdom, and slavery; in raising the down-trodden, exalting woman, caring for children, crushing superstition and persecution, freeing men from bondage to sin, revealing a common Fatherhood in God, and brotherhood in Christ, and making Christendom a center of light, whose rays have streamed to the world's end, so that there is hardly a tribe that has not heard of His name; and the whole horizon of time is lighted by His glory, and is preparing the way for His second coming in the glory of the God-head.

All this has come through Christ, as the Risen Sun of Righteousness. The Sun in the heavens pours its light in billowy mists, through the realms of space, and sustains all the animal and vegetable life on our globe; and how can any doubt but that Christ glorified can, and does, pour down from Heaven through His Spirit, make His spiritual life more intensely felt? Why doubt that He can vastly more easily convey His spiritual life and righteousness to men?

We are half matter and half spirit, and we live between two great spiritual worlds—Christ's kingdom of Light, and Satan's kingdom of Darkness; and we know, experimentally, that we are daily influenced by good and evil impulses from these spiritual forces—and his servants we are to whom we yield ourselves servants to obey—that doing good makes us like Christ, and doing evil makes us like Satan; and, but for Christ's help, the best would daily commit deadly sin, or give up the struggle against their spiritual enemies.

But Christ, in the Spirit, never ceases to strive with sinners, unless they become reprobate; and whenever they are wearied with their evil ways, He brings them to the Peace of God, and God and the Angels rejoice. This is a Spiritualism adapted to our nature, and worthy of our God; and it shows

His love, and the dignity of our nature, which, through Christ, He has provided a way to make us partakers of His Divine Nature, and inheritors of His glorious, eternal kingdom, in Heaven.





CHAPTER XLVIII.

CHRIST, THE JUDGE.

One of the final results of the Incarnation of the Son of God was to prepare Him, as the Son of Man, to be the judge of men and angels; and that revelation was coeval with man's creation and fall, and mystically foretold a Saviour to come in the seed of the woman. And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, described Christ's second coming, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand saints, to execute judgment upon all."

The Psalmist several times applies the title of Judge, to Christ; and Daniel describes "His throne as like a fiery flame, His wheels as burning fire, a fiery stream issued from Him, thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him; and the judgment was set, and the Books were opened."

Like all the great doctrines of revelation, this was dimly revealed at first, and grew through centuries—as is seen in the traditions of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Babylonians, and Oriental nations, and in the mythology of the Greeks and Romans. Homer, Plato, and Virgil wrote of Rhadamanthus, Son of Jupiter, who reigned on earth so justly that he was made judge of Hades; and there is an evident confounding of the prophecies of Christ, in these traditions and mythology.

The expectation of rewards and punishments for deeds done here, in a future life, seems to be instinctive in man; though it is not strong enough to impel them to do right, or restrain them from evil. And the motive never was clearly taught, until Christ employed it.

Observation and experience teach, that this world is disordered by man's violation of God's physical and moral laws; that injuries and outrages go unpunished; that the wicked prosper to life's end, and their victims suffer to the end; and multitudes of wrongs are never righted, and some could not be, even if the wronger desired it; and individuals and nations commit great crimes, and generations live and die with their evil deeds unatoned. None pass this life without cause to accuse others, or be accused of deeds they wish they had not done.

And the sense of justice in men impels them to form governments; and make large expenditures for Congresses, Parliaments, and Legislatures, and Courts of Justice, and Judges, and Officers, to enact and execute laws to secure its ends. But laws are often unjust, judges are partial, jurors dishonest, witnesses false, and, after all, human exertions fail to secure the objects desired. And it would be an impugment of the wisdom and justice of God, if there were no remedy for this. It is reasonable, therefore—if man be immortal, and God be just and holy—that there should be some final remedy, whereby these wrongs will be righted; and our Saviour declared that there will be a general resurrection, that there may be a general judgment, and rewards and punishments which will be eternal. This is also reasonable; because, as the body is the chief cause and seat of sin—so, also, should it live again, to be rewarded or punished with the immortal spirit which co-operated in its sin.

This belief in God's final and infinite justice—that He will one day avenge the wrongs and reward the good deeds of men—has done much to help preserve the belief of a future judg-

ment, to sustain them under injustice, and encourage them to acts of benevolence. But it is only since Christ, that it has been a moral force; and mankind have believed that there will be infinite wisdom and justice in every judgment, because the Son of God, who has been tempted, suffered and died in a human nature, as the Son of Man, will be the Judge. Therefore, we are sure His justice will be tempered with mercy; and none will be able to say that they have not had the best Judge, and the fairest judgment, which were in the power of an Almighty, Holy, and loving God and Father to provide.

Christ taught the Jews that He was Judge in Heaven, before His incarnation, saying, "The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son;" and He condemned and cast out the fallen angels. And it is in virtue of His original judicial power as the Son of God, that the Father made Him Judge of this world, as the Son of Man. And there is hardly anything relating to our future life that He revealed more about, than the final judgment. He called it, coming in His glory—saying, "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations. And the angels will separate the righteous from the wicked; and to one He will say, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" and to the others He will say, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

In a discourse to the Jews, at Jerusalem, when they first began to desire to kill Him, He told them that He had this power—to judge—from the Father, as the Son of Man. Christ, as the Son of God, had the first authority with the Father; but Christ, as the Son of Man, had it by commission from the Father and the Son. And the reason He gave those inimical men was a warning to them, that all should honor the Son, even as they

honor the Father; His judicial circuit embraces the whole universe, because He is to judge angels, and devils, and men.

It was a warning against their denial and rejection of Him, and He further signified when and what the penalty would be. "For the hour is coming in which all who are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they who have done good unto the Resurrection of Life, and they who have done evil unto the Resurrection of Damnation." Then and there, He, as the Son of Man, would be the judge; and, in the charge He gave the Twelve Apostles, when He first sent them out to teach, He authorized them to say, "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father who is in Heaven; and whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father who is in Heaven."

Our Lord revealed to His Apostles, while He was in the flesh, many details which were to precede and attend that awful and sublime event, which must be the grandest scene that has ever taken place in the whole history of God and eternity. The creation of the material universe, so vast that no human instrument can discover its outer bounds, and no human mind imagine the extent of space, was a tremendous work of God. But Christ said it would be burned up with unquenchable fire; and this, is His own revealed description of that day and scene:

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the Heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the Books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every man according to their works. And Death and Hades were cast into the Lake of

Fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life, was cast into the Lake of Fire. And I saw a new Heaven and a new earth, for the first Heaven and the first earth had passed away; and there was no more sea."

St. Peter also says, "The Heavens and the earth which are now by the same WORD (one of Christ's titles) are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.... But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth, also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up."

Now, it is to be observed, that though neither St. Peter, nor the philosophers of his day, knew anything of the nature of the elements of which the Earth and Heavens (the worlds in space) are composed, yet this is a strictly scientific explanation of what will take place, should there be a universal combustion of the created universe. First, he says, the material worlds "are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment;" and modern science teaches that there is reserved, or stored, in the earth and solar system, about one-half of their bulk, the inflammable and most combustable element of oxygen; and that a slight chemical change in the elements would kindle the whole into a burning mass, filling the visible space with a sea of flame, and the awful resounding explosion of the burning worlds. And is not this a new and modern kind of proof of our Lord's foreknowledge and Divinity, and of the truth of the Gospel as a Divine revelation; for it is only a century since oxygen was discovered; and the Apostles say what they write after Christ's Ascension, they had learned from Him. (1 Cor. xiv:37.)

This sublime and awful pyrotechny is to give grandeur and glory to our Lord's Second Advent, in His glorified person—to sit, as the Son of Man, in judgment on the world; there, on

His great white throne, in the vast space from which the worlds have disappeared, will He assemble before Him the quick and dead of men, and the angels; and the Books will be opened, as He has foretold. He said before His crucifixion, that, as the Son of Man, He did not know when the day would be; but, in God's reckoning, it would not be a great while; and His Church must pray, and be ready to meet it, because He would come suddenly, and when men did not expect it. But after His glorification in the God-head, He knew when it would be; and He has ever since been making preparations in Heaven and on Earth for its coming.

And, as He told the Apostles the evening before His crucifixion, that He was about to leave them, but would return in a little while—and He was absent only three days; and after His resurrection promised to be with them until the end of the world, and staid with them only forty days after His resurrection—it was reasonable that they should look for His return soon, from Heaven, and for the Judgment.

But after the Holy Ghost came and enlightened them, they saw that there were many prophecies of Christ to be fulfilled before the end; nevertheless, every century since, there has been an alarm sounded that He was about to come. But the old Hebrew tradition was—that the world would last six of God's days, of a thousand years; and that the epoch would have a morning, a noon, and an evening—the morning was from Adam to Noah, the noon from Noah to Christ, and the evening from His first to His second coming. And St. Paul said, "Now, once, in the end of the world, hath Christ appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." By the Hebrew tradition and chronology, the world has more than a century yet to survive; but nearly all our Lord's prophecies, which were to precede the end, are fulfilled and fulfilling.

Only a few shepherds and the Holy Angels were witnesses

of His first coming; but when He comes again it will be in the glory of the Godhead, and every eye shall behold Him. Only a few more of our Lord's prophecies remain to be fulfilled, that the Gospel shall be preached, over all the world—not that all nations shall be converted—but shall have the Gospel offered to them; that chains shall be broken from all slaves, knowledge shall run to and fro, and men become like gods, by their discoveries and inventions, the Jews engrafted back on to their original stock in Christ's kingdom, and all political power be severed from the Church—then the end will be.

And Christ has told us how the day will be ushered in; it will be a common day, just like any other—no sign of its approach—men will be buying and selling, and marrying, and giving in marriage; just as they were when the deluge came, and fire from Heaven consumed Sodom and Gomorrah: suddenly the trump of the Arch-angel will sound to herald the Son, the dead will awake, the living change to spiritual bodies—as they ascend on the air to meet the Lord—and as the exploded worlds pass away, angels and men will stand before Christ, and the Judgment will begin. And the Lord thus describes the closing scene: “When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the Holy Angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say (here He will be in His Divine Royalty, King of His Kingdom, not of this world) unto them on the right hand; Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world.... Then shall He say, also, unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into

life eternal." St. Paul says, "God hath appointed the day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." And Christ, who is the Judge, has revealed to us that His judgment will be according to the deeds done in the body; and there will be no appeal from His decision, and never any reconsideration of His judgment—but the rewards and punishments will be unchangeable and eternal.

Nothing is said of any judgment on our faith, or religious experience, because no man will do rightly unless he first believes rightly; acts tell the character of the faith, thoughts, and desires of the mind and will. And as these are the main spring of human acts, we shall be judged for all the thoughts and desires of the whole life; for thoughts which came unbidden, and were harbored or repulsed, thoughts which we had forgotten while living, and which we would give all the world, were it ours, that we had never thought—all will come before Christ, and be weighed in the balance of His infinite judgment.

And if we shudder at the thought of such a scrutiny, what will be the feeling of shame at having a whole life exposed before the assembly of men and angels; words of impurity, dishonesty and injustice; and deeds of shame, whereby we have defiled bodies made in God's likeness, and dishonored Him! And these deeds will not come up then as memory recalls them now—one by one—there will be no past, but all present; all the good and all the evil done here, works of love and mercy, and works of hatred and meanness, all the neglected or wasted opportunities of the whole life, will rise up together, and flash in one awful aggregate before our minds, as well as the Judge's. Sins repented of, and unrepented sins, will be seen as we never saw them before—in the light of Christ's presence, and of their

eternal consequences, and will fill us with a joy or sorrow that will never end.

There will be three unimpeachable witnesses, to testify for and against us—the Holy Spirit, Satan, and our own Conscience; from this tribunal there will not only be no appeal: but when Christ pronounces His judgment all mouths will be silenced, and every person will admit that His sentence is perfectly just; and that the love and mercy of a loving God, and Heavenly Father, could not have rendered it otherwise, and been true to the principles of eternal justice.

Only one thing more is revealed of the mysteries, which are on the other side of our resurrection life, and the day of judgment—and that is, all God purposed in the works of Creation will be accomplished, righteous men will be like Christ as He is like God, wicked men will be like Satan; the righteous will enter on an ever increasing knowledge of God, the wicked on an unending hopeless despair. St. John says, “Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” And St. Paul says, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory;” and “We all with open faces beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are (shall be) changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

“Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power; for He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted who did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son, also, Himself, be subject to Him who

put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." And what this means, we must wait to learn; wait until that day, when "we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known."





CHAPTER XLIX.

CONCLUSION.

In this wide and rapid survey of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, we see that His greatest revelation was Himself—the model of perfect manhood, the ideal of human perfection, a human character without blemish, immaculate; yet, in His experience, something to teach all men, in every exigency of human life; while His Resurrection, Ascension, and sending the Holy Ghost, prove that He was more than man—the Incarnate Son of God. And His doctrines were but the development of the spiritual nature of the religion God gave men in the beginning, adapting it to man's spiritual nature, as it never could have been without His Incarnation.

From the first announcement of the Incarnation in the seed of the woman, all subsequent prophecy was a series of preparation for that event; and all the extraordinary events in Christ's life were continuous fulfillments of prophecy. And in all His teaching, extending over more than three years, there is not one iota of error, contradiction, or discrepancy, or change of His opinions—such as one sees in the writings of the ablest scholars—but perfect uniformity and agreement in all He said and did. And that is a remarkable proof of His Divinity, because none but God is perfect, and “He charges His angels with folly;”

none but God never contradicts his own sayings, or doings; none but God is sinless, as Christ was; and no other man could challenge his enemies, and the generation in which He lived, to accuse him of sin, and yet escape unconvicted.

And as we look back over the world's history, we see the One Man, Christ Jesus, standing there as the great dividing line between the two worlds, or civilizations—which existed before and since His advent, between the moral darkness of the old world, and the spiritual enlightenment of the new. He first taught the relations between the physical and spiritual worlds, by the analogies of their mutual laws, and modern science traces to His modes of reasoning its first beginnings; by seeing how Christ thought, mankind has learned how to think. Judaism had but little art, and no science; and the cause of the downfall of ancient civilization was want of knowledge of science. And the new spiritual force given by Christ to the human mind, enabled it to discover the laws of nature, and improve soils, increase crops, and make new inventions to benefit the race, as well as to struggle out of its moral darkness to a higher righteousness. The old world longed for a Deliverer from its bondage; the new world has longed for conformity to the likeness of the Deliverer, and this has created a new civilization.

With Christ began not only a more spiritual religion, but also a new means of grace, after the coming of the Holy Ghost, to help men rise above themselves; a new movement was given to society, which revolutionized the civil, social, and domestic order of things. And from that little central land of Judea, the light of Christ's life and righteousness has rolled out like a sea of glory over all the earth—and was never more potential than now—until His Church has made Christendom the world's center of light, as He made Galilee.

From this general review of Christ's life and doctrines, it is apparent that He was conscious from the beginning of His min-

istry ; and partially so from childhood, of His two-fold nature as the God-MAN—and that He sometimes spake with reference to His human nature, as the Son of Man; and sometimes of His doings as the Son of God. Yet, in this latter sense, always enigmatically, so that no Apostle believed Him a person of the God-head, while He was with them; because it was not revealed until after His resurrection—first, in the commission to baptize in the name of the three Divine Persons; and second, when the Holy Ghost came and enlightened their minds; and for some time it was held as a sacred mystery, to be told only to believers. And this looks strange to us, only because we were born, baptized, and trained in its knowledge. There was the same reason for concealing it for a time from the world, as there was for not revealing it to the disciples—it was not able to bear it.

Christ's Divinity, which was rejected as blasphemy by the Jews, and denied by the Gnostics, has ever since been a subject of skepticism in the world; yet the doctrine has outlived all the great persecutions and assaults of unbelievers, and the opposition of men and nations for two thousand years—the Rock of Eternity in the Ocean of Time—and it will continue the belief of the best and most enlightened of mankind until Christ comes again; millions on earth and in Paradise are called Christians after Him, and consider it the greatest glory and the highest honor God or man can confer. And the truth of His Divinity is now confirmed by the fact, that, after all that has been said against the doctrine, time has added new proofs in the fulfillment of His prophecies; and after all that has been written respecting His life and character, the originality, grandeur, and glory of it, are yet unexhausted, unexhaustable.

In announcing Himself the Light of the world, Christ declared Himself the Author of a higher knowledge than the world before had—a knowledge from God, which has ever since been gradually illuminating the realms of Theology and Science,

as it is hidden in His created and written revelations; and modern science, and our knowledge of the laws of force, and mind, and matter, and the universe, date their rise from Him.

And yet, after all our modern discoveries, we yet find the same mysteries encompassing us that existed in Christ's life and works; the correlation of the forces of nature, which have been discovered, are as much a mystery as the unity of the Three Divine Persons in the God-head. And thus the revelations mutually confirm each other as from one God; and are one of our best proofs that God, who created the material universe, is our God and Saviour.

The mysteries of Christ's life and religion—so far from being a hinderance to believing in the one, and practicing the other—are confirmations of His claim to be the Son of God, and the Creator of the universe; because every where we see the same kind of mysteries, and we find that those in the natural world do not interfere with the pleasures or duties of this life, but rather quicken the mind to new research; so neither do the mysteries of religion in any way hinder the practice of its duties, but inspire us with reverence for the greater wisdom of God.

And from whatever point we look at Christ's life, He appears to be not only a man eminently endowed by God, like the prophets, and such a Saviour as the Jews expected, but far more as a superhuman person; not the Son of God veiled in a human body, but the very God the Son, conjoined in a human nature, so as to make Him the one and only God-MAN, such as never before or since appeared in our world—and by which He was fitted to be the Redeemer, Saviour, and Judge of mankind.

The doctrine of future rewards and punishments, Christ revealed, and the power of the Holy Spirit, gave to the race, as time moved on, a sobriety and energy of thought, that enabled the human mind to grapple with the laws and mysteries of nature—which increased for centuries, until it reached its present

condition, in which men, have become like God, in knowledge of the Laws and forces of nature, and in applying them to their own use, and improvement.

It would be interesting to know how Christ looked in the prime of His manhood; but little is said of His personal appearance to gratify curiosity, because it would be of no practical benefit, and our love and reverence depend only on His Divine nature and character.

There is but little in the Prophets or Evangelists that enables us to form any ideal of Christ, as the Son of Man; a veil of mystery hangs over His face and form, as there is over every thing in His superhuman life. The Psalmist foretells Him "as altogether lovely;" Isaiah calls Him "the King in His beauty," and, again, "there is no beauty in Him;" and Zachariah extols "His greatness and His goodness and beauty." And there is only one saying in the Gospel that gives any idea of His person, where the Jews said to Him, "Thou art not yet fifty years old;" indicating that He looked much older than He was. St. John says, "We beheld His glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" the grace may refer to His refined manners and majestic presence, and the truth to His holy life and doctrines—but we can only imagine the meaning.

These conflicting statements bewilder us respecting His personal appearance; and there is little probability that the lovely description of Christ, the pen-portrait, by Publius Lentulus is genuine; and the representations made by Clemens of Alexandria, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Origen, are some of the various early traditions that are without any satisfactory corroboration. But while hardly anything is known of His likeness, there is abundance as to His character, that is of vastly more consequence; the awe He inspired in His enemies, the reverence of His disciples, the confidence and love of children, the absence of pride and self-assertion, and His courtesy and benevolence,

and the love of the people, assure us that there was an inexpressible charm—the beauty of holiness in His face, a Divine sweetness which made His manhood so perfect that no insult or injury provoked Him to retort or revile; and nothing but hypocrisy or unbelief caused Him to rebuke His enemies.

And from the brief records of His earthly life—from childhood to the end—it appears full of mingled meekness and majesty, of firmness and gentleness, of candor and reserve; free from every morbid tendency to fanaticism or excitement, of pride or vain glory, of impetuosity or weakness, or any desire for earthly fame or glory, or any kind of one-sidedness. Twice, only, is He said to have wept—and never once to have smiled.

While He manifested all that belongs to the highest conception of perfect Manhood, and all the power and love of God—such as had never been seen in any man—there was, also, in Him another characteristic, equally original—a feminine delicacy and tenderness, which belonged only to Him, as the Seed of the Woman, and the Son of God; and gave a peculiar courtesy and charm to His manners; and which, so far as it was inimitable, would exalt His disciples above any other generation that had ever lived.

And His enemies then—as unbelievers now are—were compelled to confess that He lived such a life as no other man ever lived, taught as none other ever taught, and made such an impression on our world as no other man ever did, and that truth was never more apparent than now.

Men deny His miracles now, because they are “impossible from the immutable laws of Nature,” as if laws were uncontrollable by their Maker, and they suppose the fact of His Divinity, and the truth of His religion, depended on them; whereas He never wrought one to prove His Divinity, and but one to convince men that He had power to forgive sins; and they are of

no consequence, as proofs of His Messiahship, except as collateral to confirm His superhuman life and character. The most He ever said respecting His miracles, was, "If ye do not believe Me, believe My works;" and if no one had ever been recorded in the Gospels, or He had never wrought one, there would yet remain the imperishable miracles wrought after His death—of His Resurrection and Ascension to Heaven—which have been preserved by the two great Festivals, yearly celebrated by His Church; and the stupendous results His religion has produced in elevating men and nations, and the civilization and science that it has created in Christendom. The miracles are but the dust in the balances to prove His Divinity, in comparison with His holy life, His Divine character, and the ever increasing power of His righteousness in the mind of each Christian, and His Holy Catholic Church, which lightens the whole world.

No other man bearing any likeness to Christ—or claiming, as He did, to be one with Almighty God, who lived and wrought as He did to prove it—has ever appeared on earth; no other man has told so much of the mysteries of God, of man's future life, or of the results which his own life would produce in future ages, as He did. As the Son of God, He personated Adam, as he was created holy—the crown and glory of the visible creation; as the Son of Man, He personated Adam in his sinfulness, made subject to the law, to temptations, trials, and death—without sin Himself, but made an offering for sin—to save man from its power and penalty, and that He might be a merciful Judge.

In the God-MAN, Christ Jesus, the second Adam, we see how glorious man's original nature was, and what He is yet capable of becoming; because, through Christ in the Spirit, we are made partakers of the Divine nature, and can, or shall in a future life, be raised above what Adam was before his fall—to a sinless and immortal state. For St. Paul says, "When Christ,

who is our life, shall appear, we shall be like Him, and shall see Him as He is.”

The secret of Christ’s power in our world, is because He is God—as it is seen in His disregard of earthly riches, fame, or glory, which men so desire and strive for; and because He revealed such knowledge of God and man, of Heaven and Hell, of time and eternity, as none but God could know, and made prophecies which have been fulfilled, and have produced such results on earth as none but God could.

Great Prophets before Christ revealed God’s will, wrought miracles, and taught men to be holy, because God is holy; but all of them were stained by sin. None claimed to be God’s Son; none had righteousness like His; none taught by a personal Divine, “Verily, verily, I say unto you;” none said, “I have given you an example;” none called the weary and heavy laden, and said, “Come, and I will give you rest;” and none ever said to a sinner, “I say unto you, your sins are forgiven.”

Every stage of Jesus’ life, from His conception to His ascension, was a continuous fulfillment of prophecy; He had no pride, ambition, or self-assertion; He declined all earthly honors, chose His Apostles from lowly and unlearned men, and was with them as a servant; He courted no society or favors from the noble or rich, exacted no special reverence from His disciples, and never looked down on the chiefest of sinners, but raised the fallen and broken hearted.

It was with no vain glory that He declared Himself the Son of God, but that He might persuade men to believe and be saved; and, as the Son of Man, He submitted to the Law and the suffering of death, for our salvation.

When multitudes flocked to hear His teaching, or see His miracles, it caused Him no elation; when they wanted to make Him a king, He withdrew Himself; and His divinest characteristic was His deep humility. God, in man’s nature, assaulted

by wicked men and devils, and suffering death at men's hands; and no greater humility or condescension can be imagined, than that.

Again, when the tide of popularity turned, and the Rulers of the Jews began to seek His life—when Judas betrayed Him, the Apostles deserted, Peter denied, the High Priest condemned, and Pilate unjustly assented to His crucifixion—He made no complaint, offered no plea as a ground to save Himself from the ignominious death; but confessed Himself the Son of God, and for it suffered death for man. On the cross, He said nothing of the injustice which put Him there—He was satisfying God's justice for the sins of a whole world—and He prayed for His murderers. With Christ, His life and religion were one, because He is holy, and His life eternal; and where His life is now in men, they have a righteousness in some degree like His. Faith in this personal Christ is the foundation of all Christian life and character, and the only way to develop a Christian manhood like His; we see the beauty of holiness and love in His character, and they inspire us with longings to be like Him. And His unquenchable love for God's old kingdom and people—a people who were to take His life, and were so little worthy of His love—is a proof of His Sonship to God, which no argument can weaken; because it is such love as none but God, under the circumstances, could show.

There is an infinite gap between Christ's genealogy and that of all the Gentile Gods, by the apotheosis of their ancestors; or who, like the Egyptians, traced the descent of their Gods from Pan; the Orientals, from Brahma; the Greeks and Romans, from Zeus; and the Teutons, from Wodin. Yet, their association of a human person in the God-head was doubtless the traditional preservation of the old expectation of the Incarnation, and prepared the way for the world to accept it. But there is no fiction of that kind in Christ's genealogy. His

earthly Mother is the Blessed Virgin, and His only Father, the ever-living God. And the preservation of the pedigree of His human nature is one of our world's wonders, and incidental proofs of His Divinity; because no royal line can trace its pedigree back a thousand years, and no nobles of England or France, where such records are best preserved, can trace their names or titles further than the eleventh century.

Thus, it was, He left to the world something in His example, which has ever since served as a consolation and support to every one of our race.

When Archbishop Laud was led to execution he said, "I am now come to the end of my life and Christian race; here I find the Cross and a death of shame, but the shame I must despise, or I shall not come to God. I shall most willingly drink this Cup of the Passover, with its bitter herbs, as deep as He pleases;" and kneeling down he prayed, "O Eternal God, and Merciful Father, look down upon me in the riches and fullness of Thy mercies, but not until Thou hast nailed my sins to the Cross of Christ; not until I have hid myself in the wounds of Christ." Again, when the executioner went to lead Louis XVI to the scaffold, and an official seized his hands to bind them, the King drew back saying he would never consent to such an indignity; but the attending priest said, "Sire suffer this as your last resemblance to your suffering Saviour;" and he stretched out his hands, saying, "Surely I needed the example of the Son of God to enable me to submit." The power of such an example, centuries after Jesus crucifixion, is a stronger proof of His Divinity than all the miracles He ever wrought; and no one of all the millions of our race has ever been subjected to such injustice or cruelty, that he could not see in Christ's example something to console or support him. Nor has any Patriarch, Prophet, Apostle, Saint or Martyr, from the beginning of the world to this day, ever attained to such righteous-

ness and wisdom—that there was not in Christ something infinitely beyond them, and which he never reached. Every act of His life had the seal of Divinity, and every revelation He made was a truth, which none but God could know.

There is also an infinite classm between the ancient systems formed by the great thinkers of antiquity, and the doctrines of Christ; the Vedas, and Precepts of Confucius, the Zendavesta and the Koran all profess to educate man, fit him for the highest duties of life, and bring him into relation with the unseen world, and to the God of their respective creeds—but in none of them are the plain revelations of Gospel truths; and none of them did anything to elevate the masses of the people, and raise them from the moral darkness and degradation which prevailed when Christ came. Jesus was far in advance in wisdom, righteousness, and philosophy, and science, not only of His own generation, but also of all who before or since lived. In all the characteristics which most elevate, dignify, and adorn man, He stands alone; the one perfect, Divine model—approachable by others from all sides, but impossible to reach. He was hated and watched as no other man ever was; and one wrong act, one untrue word, one flaw in His character, would have shattered His claim to be the Son of God—but there was not one. He was holy, undefiled, separate from sinners; and His enemies testified that He spake the truth, cared for no man, and spake as no other man ever did.

He ever exercised a superhuman self-restraint towards His enemies, and a tenderness and sympathy for the sick and afflicted which was new among men, and originated a new feeling of brotherhood in mankind. It was the Light, Life, and Righteousness of the Son of God, introduced here from Heaven:—which revolutionized the religions, laws, manners, and customs, of society, and created our modern civilization and science, filled Christendom with Cathedrals and Churches, where Christ is

worshipped as God; which has built colleges and schools, and hospitals and houses of mercy, and institutions for alleviating all human suffering and sorrow. And it is said that the first hospital ever built on earth was at Bethlehem, where Jesus was born.

And it is the power of His endless life and Heavenly doctrines which have made this impression in our world, before which Paganism and heathenism have gradually receded at the triumphal progress of Christianity; and the masses in Christendom who do not believe or obey His Gospel, as well as the outlying Pagans who never heard of Christ, feel the benefits and share in some of the blessings which flow out from Christendom—while His Church has resisted the assaults of all her enemies that have dashed against her foundations, for nineteen centuries, without impairing their strength; and they have fallen forgotten, like foam into the ocean of time, and like the waves of the sea beating a rock-bound coast.

And the men and nations that have received Christianity, have been, from Christ's day to our own, of the highest types of intelligence, and honor, and of all the characteristics which most dignify and adorn mankind, and testify that they have found it a consolation and support under the severest trials of this life; and the men who have departed, triumphed over death by it. And any person who will not believe in Christ, as the Son of God, who created us men and was incarnate and died to redeem us, on such evidence, would not believe on any testimony God or man could furnish; and it is now too late to fear that it will not continue to be the faith and consolation of the wisest, the best instructed, and the highest intellectual and moral types of mankind, until Christ comes again in the glory of God the Father.

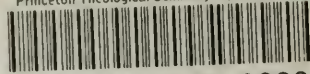
Finally, it is impossible that the life of Christ was either fiction or forgery, because Hebrew, Greek, and Roman civilizations had met in Palestine, when Christ was born; and Egypt,

the East, and Africa had representatives there. And Christ was brought in contact, in so many directions, with contemporary history, topography, politics, manners and customs of the age—that it would have been especially dangerous, and next to impossible, for a writer of fiction to invent a plausible story; and a forger could not have made such an one out of such inextricable perplexities as he would have had to steer through, in such a state of society, without many errors. And no single mistake has been discovered in the numberless allusions to all these things then existing in Palestine. If there be anything to be relied on from human testimony, it is that the Gospels were written then and there, and are a revelation from God; and that Jesus Christ was the second Person of the Godhead, Incarnate, “whom the Heavens must receive until the Times of Resurrection of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His Holy Prophets, since the world began.”



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